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The INTERNATIONAL Magazine

EXCLUSIVE:
WHAT ALBANIA'S MANAGER THINKS OF ENGLAND

EUROPEAN CUPS
QUARTER-FINALS SIX-PAGE SPECIAL

DASAYEV'S SPANISH NIGHTMARE

VETERANS' WORLD CUP — FULL REPORT

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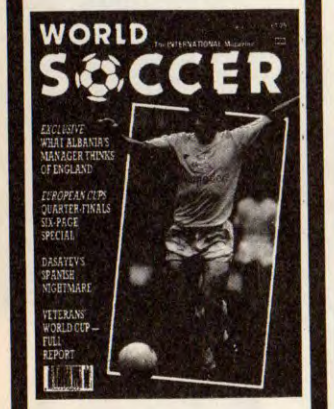

FRONT COVER star is Bayern Munich's Olaf Thon. Tony Cottee is on the back.

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WORLD CUP THREAT TO EUROPE AND SOUTH AMERICA

FIFA president Joao Havelange has given a broad hint that Europe could find its allocation of places at future World Cup finals reduced.

Speaking at the World Youth Cup in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, the Brazilian head of the world game said that he intends to place "certain proposals" before the FIFA executive after next year's finals in Italy.

The African and Asian confederations have been pressing hard for an increase of representation from two nations to three nations each at the World Cup finals. European officials see this as a direct threat to their dominance of allocations — for example, Europe will provide 14 of the 24 finalists next year in Italy.

Havelange's plans in this direction have always been regarded with caution because he has obtained much of his political strength within the game by cultivating the third world nations whose voting strength within FIFA is becoming more and more significant.

However Havelange himself is under no illusions about the prospects for change and the opposition any such proposals would meet.

He also said: "I must acknowledge that while Africa and Asia send three teams each to compete in the finals of the Olympic Games we have yet to see any of them win gold medals."

Havelange said he plans to put new proposals to combat drugs and hooliganism to FIFA's executive committee.

Richard Gough (left) heads Scotland's overtime goal to beat Cyprus in Limassol. Furious Cypriot fans attacked referee Siegfried Kirschen for adding on six minutes stoppage time. The Scots now take on France. Special feature — Pages 12 and 13.

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DISASTROUS START FOR SAUDI ARABIA

HOSTS Saudi Arabia made a disastrous start to the 1989 World Youth Cup. Barely had the usual doves of peace winged their way out of the King Fahd International Stadium than they were beaten 2-1 in the opening match by Nigeria.

Saudi Arabia took the lead through Sadoun Al-Suraiti in the 16th minute. But Nigeria took over after half-time, equalised through Mutiu Adepoju in the 53rd minute, and snatched a last-minute winner thanks to a 35-yard free kick from Christopher Ohenhen which surprised keeper Saud Al-Otaibi.

He was replaced by Hassan Adam for the next match in group A. But the Saudis disappointed again, this time going down 1-0 to Czechoslavakia. Radoslav Latal scored the decisive goal.

The Soviet Union and favourites Brazil were first qualifiers for the quarter-finals after both nations won their initial two group matches. Bismarck Faria was Brazil's initial star. He created one goal in the 2-0 win over East Germany and then scored twice himself in the 5-0 thrashing of Mali.

GREEK REFEREES GO ON STRIKE!

by KEIR RADNEDGE

GREEK football was brought to a halt in the wake of a further escalation in the hooligan violence wrecking the championship.

Referees in Greece went on strike last Sunday (February 19) in protest at violent behaviour by fans and players. The day's league programme was then played out the following day.

The trouble, reported here in World Soccer last month, reached new levels when referee Nikos Crisanis was beaten up by players and spectators after a cup-tie in Crete.

The game was a 1-1 draw between OFI, the home team, and league champions Larissa, who had won the first leg 2-1.

Local fans were infuriated by Crisanis's decision to reject appeals for two penalties which could have turned the aggregate around.

When he blew the final whistle he was engulfed by hooligans. By the time police reached him Crisanis was badly injured and was taken immediately to hospital for emergency treatment.

Seven people were arrested and Crisanis has since accused three OFI players of being involved in the attack.

The referees' union has demanded that the federation ban them from soccer for life.

The referees' union in Greece is 3,500 strong and has a strong voice within the game.

Attack

The executive committee said in a statement: "In emergency session the union unanimously decided that all referee members should stay away from all championship matches in all league divisions for the weekend of February 20 in protest at the physical and verbal violence suffered by the referees and linesmen of the matches between OFI and Larissa.

"The union also demands that the Greek football federation immediately expels the players involved in the attack on Nikos Crisanis from the game at all levels."

Crisanis, who suffered head injuries, said later that he had feared even more serious injuries when the attack began.

He said: "More than a dozen fans and players began kicking and punching me about the head and face.

"Fans had blocked the entrance to the dressing room tunnel and my linesmen and I did not know which way to turn, the punches and kicks and blows were coming from all directions. I don't know how we managed to get to the dressing rooms."

Linesman Leonidas Tsoupros was also injured in the assault but refused hospital treatment.

This was not the only serious incident that day. In the same round of the cup three police officers were arrested and two fans were injured in Athens after clashes broke out at the end of a tie between Panionios and PAOK Salonika.

Three days earlier police had arrested 17 hooligans for fighting after a championship match between PAOK and Olympiakos Piraeus in Salonika.

Considering the volatile situation it is the more remarkable that there was no trouble during the friendly international in which England beat Greece 2-1 in the Athens Olympic stadium.

Security officials and the fans themselves drew congratulations and thanks from both associations for their contributions to a peaceful day.

But it should also be noted that the match was played on a working afternoon and was not a competitive fixture, involving the nationalism complications which frequently bring out the worst in supporters.

That English hooliganism is far from dead was underlined the week of the Greek referees' strike when there was trouble involving fans at the Barnsley v Everton FA Cup-tie and also on a train carrying supporters of Liverpool, who beat Hull. But there was a setback for the Government's ID cards Bill the following Monday when an amendment threatening its implementation was approved in the House of Lords.

In Holland 35 fans were arrested before PSV Eindhoven's league match against Feyenoord at the end of January and in Italy there were eight arrests after a knifing incident at a league match in Bergamo between Atalanta and league leaders Internazionale.

In Spain the league match between Osasuna and Real Madrid was abandoned after 43 minutes because of the missiles being hurled at Madrid players from behind the goal defended by controversial keeper Paco Buyo.

In Madrid a television van was destroyed by vandals attending a goalless draw between Atletico and Celta de Vigo.

● Winning the peace in Athens — Page 33

TRIUMPH AND TRAGEDY IN TURKEY

TURKISH football has met both triumph and tragedy.

Galatasaray were given a timely boost for their European Cup quarter-final against Monaco when top scorer Tanju Colak was presented, at a Monte Carlo ceremony, with his 1988 Golden Boot award.

Tanju scored 39 goals, finishing as Europe's top league scorer last year ahead of John Eriksen (Servette and Denmark) with 36 and Piturca (Steaua and Rumania) 34.

However, Turkish celebrations were muted by the road crash in which the coach (Nuri Asan) and players Mete Adanir and Muzaffer Badalioglu were killed.

The team bus had crashed off the highway on the way to a match against Matalyaspor.

Among the 15 other players seriously hurt was the former national team goalkeeper, Fatih Uraz, who suffered back injuries.

Philip Durand gets the better of David Rocastle for once in France's 2-0 Highbury defeat by Arsenal.

ENGLAND'S TOUGHEST TEST

BOBBY ROBSON and his men face their toughest test in three years when they travel to Albania for a World Cup-tie which takes England into the footballing unknown.

While the last European championship brought its own tensions and pressures, the World Cup is by far the most significant competition in football and England's toughest assignment in recent years was the quarter-final defeat by Argentina in Mexico City in 1986.

If England win in Albania then confidence and morale will provide an ideal springboard for the return against the East Europeans, the two duels with Poland and autumn return against Sweden.

Defeat would, of course, unleash the tabloid dogs of war on Robson and his players and place a large questionmark against England's qualifying prospects.

Already one of the British and Irish contingent are virtually out of the running.

Northern Ireland's 2-0 home defeat by Spain virtually condemned them to World Cup elimination.

But Scotland can make amends with a group five victory over France at Hampden Park the same day England play in Tirana.

French manager Michel Platini has been working hard to recast his team, thanks to warm-up matches against the Irish Republic (a 0-0 draw) and Arsenal (a 2-0 defeat).

But Scotland, in front of their own fans, will be favourites to send Platini and Co back the drawing board.

● Albania's warning — see Pages 28 and 29

CHAMPIONS CUP . . . . . THE LAST EIGHT

IFK GOTHENBURG v STEAUA

FIRST ROUND

Pezoporikos 1 (Livanthinos 20 pen)
IFK Gothenburg 2 (Ericsson 18, Ravelli 55)

IFK Gothenburg 5 (R.Nilsson 5, Zetterlund 7, Holmgren 26, Froberg 44, 54)
Pezoporikos 1 (Livanthinos 39)
IFK 7-2 on agg

Sparta Praha 1 (Kukleta 20)
Steaua Bucharest 5 (Lacatus 29, 44, Hagi 78, 88, Stoica 86)

Steaua Bucharest 2 (Hagi 39, Lacatus 78)
Sparta Praha 2 (Bilek 12, 88)
Steaua 7-3 on agg

SECOND ROUND

Nentori 0
IFK Gothenburg 3 (Forsberg 31, Ingesson 35, Lennart Nilsson 82)

IFK Gothenburg 1 (Forsberg 30)
Nentori 0
IFK 4-0 on agg

Steaua Bucharest 3 (Dumitrescu 33, Hagi 58, 70 pen)
Moscow Spartak 0

Spartak Moscow 1 (Cherenkov 44)
Steaua Bucharest 2 (Lacatus 11, Balint 89)
Steaua 5-1 on agg

WERDER BREMEN v MILAN

FIRST ROUND

Dynamo East Berlin 3 (Doll 16, Thom 62, Pastor 77)
Werder Bremen 0

Werder Bremen 5 (Kutzop 23pen, Hermann 55, Riedle 63, Burgsmuller 71, Schaaf 89)
Dynamo E.Berlin 0
Bremen 5-3 on agg

Vitosha 0
Milan 2 (Virdis 18, Gullit 75)

Milan 5 (Van Basten 2, 13, 42, 83)
Vitosha 2 (Nachev 29, Iliev 73)
Milan 7-2 on agg

SECOND ROUND

Celtic 0
Werder Bremen 1 (Wolter 58)

Werder Bremen 0
Celtic 0
Bremen 1-0 on agg

Milan 1 (Virdis 48)
Red Star Belgrade 1 (Stojkovic 47)

Red Star 1 (Stojkovic 38pen)
Milan 1 (Van Basten 34)
Milan 4-2 on penalties: 2-2 agg after extra time

PSV EINDHOVEN v R. MADRID

FIRST ROUND

PSV Eindhoven: bye

Real Madrid 3 (Losada 19, Tendillo 27, Butraguewo 30)
Moss 0

Moss 0
Real Madrid 1 (Butragueno 39)
Madrid 4-0 on agg

SECOND ROUND

PSV Eindhoven 5 (Kieft 15, Ellerman 35, Koeman 41, 52, Jansson 50)
FC Porto 0

Porto 2 (Rui Aguas 43, Domingos 82)
PSV Eindhoven 0
PSV 5-2 on agg

Gornik Zabrze 0
Real Madrid 1 (Hugo Sanchez 65 pen)

Real Madrid 3 (Hugo Sanchez 27, 83, Butragueno 76)
Gornik 2 (Jegor 40, Baran 53)
Real Madrid 4-2 on agg

MONACO v GALATASARAY

FIRST ROUND

Valur 1 (Edvaldsson 55)
Monaco 0

Monaco 2 (Vogel 14, Weah 35)
Valur Reykjavik 0
Monaco 2-1 on agg

Rapid Vienna 2 (Kranjcar 33, Kienast 51)
Galatasaray 1 (B.Savas 81)

Galatasaray 2 (Tanju 53, Cuneyt 65)
Rapid Vienna 0
Galatasaray 3-2 on agg

SECOND ROUND

Brugge 1 (Mbuyu 47)
Monaco 0

Monaco 6 (Fofana 6, 27, 74, Sonor 9, Toure 25, 31)
Club Brugge 1 (Audoon 63)
Monaco 6-2 on agg

Neuchatel Xamax 3 (Luethi 55, 80, Decastel 90)
Galatasaray 0

Galatasaray 5 (Ugur Tutuneker 19, 75, Tanju 54, 80, 87)
Xamax Neuchatel 0
Galatasaray 5-3 on agg

Quarter-finals
(To be played March 1 and 15)

TOP of the intrigue charts is the revenge tie between PSV EINDHOVEN and REAL MADRID. Last season PSV, on their way to victory in the final in Stuttgart, beat Madrid in the semi-finals. Madrid took defeat badly, both Hugo Sanchez and Michel collecting hefty UEFA suspensions for their tempestuous treatment of the match officials at the end of the second leg in Holland. Now, as then, Madrid's weak link remains their defence. But PSV have their own problems. Ronald Koeman is counting the days until he transfers to Barcelona, Van Breukelen is out injured and Wim Kieft is also struggling for match fitness. Brazilian striker Romario has adjusted well to Dutch football since his transfer after the Olympics but, judged by PSV's poor displays in the Supercup defeat by Mechelen, may still be found wanting in experience terms in European competition. IFK GOTHENBURG and STEAUA BUCHAREST will find their mutual ring-rustiness after the winter breaks in Sweden and Rumania cancel themselves out. IFK are recasting their team but then Steaua will have to fill the gap left by asylum-seeking sweeper Miodrag Belodedici. Another even tie is the duel between MONACO and GALATASARAY. Monaco have produced some erratic form in the French league. But they could just benefit from the fact that the second, away, leg is being played in West Germany. Galatasaray, for all the goal-scoring prowess of Golden Boot-winner Tanju Colak, will badly miss the intimidating support of their Istanbul crowd. MILAN should, under normal circumstances, possess far too much craft, class and firepower for WERDER BREMEN. But the West German champions will hope to take advantage of their confidence gap evident from Milan's poor league displays. Ruud Gullit has been injured most of the season and Frank Rijkaard has failed to settle yet in a Milan team disturbed by injury and poor form.

IFK PLAN A EUROPE SURPRISE

By KEIR RADNEDGE

IF ANY Swedish club is going to win the European Champions' Cup then that club will be IFK Gothenburg.

They may not be Swedish champions now, Malmo succeeded them to the ultimate domestic crown last autumn.

But that knowledge just might fuel IFK, their players and officials and fans, with the extra incentive to go all the way this time.

Looking at the presence of the likes of Real Madrid, PSV Eindhoven and Milan in the rest of the Champions' Cup draw may provide a daunting prospect.

But, as anyone with the 'Angels' will tell you: If we are to establish ourselves at the highest level then clubs such as these all have to be beaten sooner or later.

IFK are the club with the biggest following in Sweden, founded on August 4, 1904, at a time when Gothenburg was emerging as the country's major port — and thus fertile country for the introduction of football by British sailors, diplomats and businessmen.

The initials stand for Idrottsforeningen Kamraterna but it was not for another three years that IFK made themselves noticed.

Then, on May 12, 1907, they joined forces with neighbours and rivals Jonsereds to take on the might of Orgryte, then Sweden's greatest club.

The match ended, to everyone's amazement, in a 3-3 draw and a year later IFK confirmed their potential by defeating Uppsala 4-3 in the championship play-off final.

Erik Borjesson, IFK's first great 'signing', from Jonsered, was their inspiration.

That same year he scored four goals in Sweden's first international (an 11-3 win over Norway) and later, in 1914, had a trial with Liverpool.

IFK won the championship twice more (in 1910 and 1918) before a formal league structure was set up in 1924.

Now IFK can look back on a rich history which has brought the championship their way on 14 occasions and the cup three times.

Yet, surprisingly, it was not until 1979 that IFK first won the cup. The impatience of years was released in the thrashing of Atvidaberg by 6-1 in the final.

IFK draw the biggest attendances in Sweden with an average of around 12,000 for home games to see them maintain their reputation for entertaining, if erratic, football.

For example, after winning the league in 1969 they were immediately relegated and it took them six years to return to the top flight.

Once back, the club invested heavily both in a youth programme and in experience.

National team stars Ove Kindvall, Bjorn Nordqvist, Ralf Edstrom and Torbjorn Nilsson were all brought back from professional football in Holland.

Kindvall, scorer of the winning goal for Feyenoord against Celtic in the 1970 Champions' Cup final in Milan, later progressed to general manager.

The coach at the start of the 1980s and to whom IFK still owe so much — though he has long since enhanced his reputation in Portugal with Benfica and in Italy with Roma and, now, Fiorentina — was Sven-Goran Eriksson.

He had been lured from Degerfors in 1979 to guide IFK to that long-awaited first cup win.

He also decided that IFK's football was too entertaining. They would have to compromise, which they did to instant effect.

IFK reached the Cup-winners' Cup quarter-finals in 1980 and then became the first — and so far only — Swedish team to win a European prize when they landed the UEFA Cup in 1982.

In the preliminary rounds they defeated Finnish minnows Haka Valkeakoski, Austria's Sturm Graz, Dinamo Bucharest of Rumania, Valencia and Kaiserslautern.

But West Germany's Hamburg — Kaltz, Magath, Hrubesch and Co — were overwhelming favourites for the two-leg final.

That prospect was only enhanced when IFK managed only a 1-0 win, thanks to Tord Holmgren, in the first leg in Sweden.

But in front of a 60,000 crowd in West Germany, IFK soaked up all the Hamburg pressure and killed them 3-0 on the break with goals from Dan Corneliusson, Torbjorn Nilsson and veteran full back Stig Fredriksson.

That success could not quite be translated in the top-priority Champions' Cup. The problem of the winter break is one which handicaps the Scandinavians as well as the Eastern European clubs.

When the European quarter-finals come around in March they are short on match-practice.

In the Champions' Cup in the spring of 1985 IFK were, literally, caught cold. They lost 1-0 at home and 3-2 on aggregate to Panathinaikos of Greece.

It was a strategical mistake IFK overcame the following the following year. This time they were not to be unsettled by Aberdeen, winning their quarter-final tie on the away goals rule (aggregate 2-2).

Attack leader Nilsson did not score in either leg but he made up with the two goals which inspired IFK's 3-0 defeat of Barcelona — and Terry Venables! — in the Gothenburg leg of the semi-final.

But long before the trip to Nou Camp the Swedes' nerve began to fail them. Minutes after the victory in Gothenburg the players were warning that three goals might not be enough and it was thus no surprise when Barcelona reversed the scoreline in Spain and took the tie 5-4 on penalties.

By now IFK were processing a new generation of outstanding youngsters and the Barcelona experience stood them in good stead a year later.

In the final of the 1987 UEFA Cup IFK beat Dundee United only 1-0 on home ground in the Nya Ullevi stadium. But Scottish will power and the Tannadice pressure failed to intimidate them in the return.

IFK were well worth a 1-1 draw and a second European lap of honour.

IFK's success was particularly impressive because they had lost their strike force of Nilsson and Johnny Ekstrom the previous autumn.

Nilsson retired in the wake of a cup final defeat by Malmo and Ekstrom was sold to Italian club Empoli (who later transferred him to Bayern Munich).

Nilsson was the ageing golden boy of Swedish football, who had enjoyed two spells in the full-time professional ranks. The first was in Holland with current European champions PSV Eindhoven (Nilsson left Swedish football in style with a last-match hat-trick against Halmstad) then with Kaiserslautern in West Germany.

He moved into the Bundesliga in the wake of IFK's 1982 UEFA Cup triumph having been almost single-handedly responsible for the Lauterers' elimination in the semi-finals.

Former IFK Coach Bjorn Westerberg once said that Nilsson's presence "could make all the difference between reasonable success in Europe and going all the way to the final."

Gunnar Gren, one of Sweden's all-time greats, was a hero with IFK in the late 1940s. But even he did not score with Nilsson's panache.

Nilsson once claimed five goals in a Champions' Cup-tie against Avenir Beggen and executed a beautiful solo effort in a 3-1 win over Portugal in the last World Cup qualifiers.

Nilsson had ended two years self-imposed exile from the national team only, he said, "because Dan Corneliusson isn't fit."

Nilsson's retirement was a major blow but, as we have seen, IFK rose above it. The club are used to a quick turnover in star players.

Exports in the last few years include defenders Glenn Hysen (to Fiorentina of Italy) and Peter Larsson (Ajax Amsterdam), midfielders Glenn Stromberg and Robert Prytz (both with Atalanta of Italy) as well as Ekstrom and fellow striker Stefan Pettersson.

Now they have lost Erik Thorstvedt to Tottenham. But already the transfer cash has been invested in Sweden's World Cup goalkeeper, Tomas Ravelli.

That just demonstrates why IFK, with their speed off the pitch as well as on it, are to be found right now among the European Cup's Big Eight.

THE COACH

Kjell PETTERSSON. Aged 41. IFK have a reputation for making first-class coaching appointments. In the late 1970s and early 1980s that meant Sven-Goran Eriksson (later a success with Benfica, Roma and Fiorentina) as well as Gunder Bengtsson (later Panathinaikos of Greece). Pettersson joined the club coaching staff from Farila IF in 1982 and was assistant for five years until he succeeded Bengtsson in the autumn of 1987. His No 2 is a former IFK playing favourite, Glenn Holm, aged 34, who was a member of the 1982 UEFA Cup-winning side as well as having been a Swedish youth and under-21 international.

THE PLAYERS

Tomas RAVELLI. Goalkeeper. Aged 29 (born August 13, 1959) with 60 caps. Sweden's first-choice keeper, rated one of Europe's best and IFK's newest signing from Osters Vaxjo as replacement for Tottenham-bound Erik Thorstvedt. Ravelli's father was born in Austria but emigrated to Sweden and Thomas's twin brother Andreas, an IFK team-mate, is a Swedish international midfield player. Considered a safe keeper who has overcome the suspect temperament which once saw him sent off during a 2-0 defeat by Mexico in Morelia in November, 1983.

Magnus VERDIN. Goalkeeper. Aged 19. Still a student but also a Swedish youth international who has played 14 times for his country at junior level. Verdin joined IFK last year from minor club Kungsbacka BI.

Roland NILSSON. Rightback or midfield. Aged 25 (born November 27, 1963) with 19 caps. Began with junior club IK Borgandy and joined IFK from Helsingborgs IF in 1983. A former youth, under-21 and Olympic international, he forced his way into the IFK team as a regular early in 1986 and made his senior Sweden debut in a goalless draw a few months later against the Soviet Union. Off the pitch Nilsson is a marketing consultant.

Per Edmund MORDT. Defender. Aged 23 (born March 25, 1965) with 29 caps for Norway. Mordt was discovered by top Norwegian club Valerengen but was quickly snapped up by IFK three years ago. He was then a left back but IFK converted him into midfield with great success — apart from the moment when Mordt missed the decisive penalty in the 1986 Champions' Cup semi-final shoot-out in Barcelona.

Ola SVENSSON. Defender. Aged 25 with representative experience for Sweden at Olympic and under-21 level. Svensson joined IFK from Halmstads BK at the start of last year.

Andreas RAVELLI. Central defender/defensive midfield. Aged 29 (born August 13, 1959) with 40 caps (two goals). Twin brother of goalkeeper Tomas Ravelli and who transferred to IFK a year ago from Osters Vaxjo — the twins' only previous club. Andreas Ravelli has also played 12 times for Sweden at under-21 level and won four youth caps.

Pontus KAMARK. Defender. Aged 22 with five youth caps and three under-21 appearances for Sweden. Kamark has just joined IFK from Vasteras SK.

Magnus PERSSON. Defender. Aged 20 with two youth caps for Sweden. Persson began with the junior club Lindoms GIF and has just been promoted to the first-team squad from

● Continued on page 40

CUP WINNERS CUP . . . . . THE LAST EIGHT

AARHUS v BARCELONA

FIRST ROUND

Glenavon 1 (McCann 17)
AGF Aarhus 4 (Mortensen 25, Pingel 52, 80, Reeber 67)

Aarhus 3 (Henrik Mortensen 26, Bjorn Kristensen 65, John Stampe 87)
Glenavon 1 (McConville 88)
Aarhus 7-2 on agg

Fram Reykjavik 0
Barcelona 2 (Roberto 33 and 62)

Barcelona 5 (Lineker 9, Beguiristain 23, 63, Roberto 65, Baquero 72)
Fram Reykjavik 0
Barcelona 7-0 on agg

SECOND ROUND

Cardiff 1 (Gilligan 41)
Aarhus 2 (Kristensen 8 and 73)

Aarhus 4 (Pingel 15, Andersen 25, 75, Stampe 82 pen)
Cardiff 0
HT: 2-0. Att: 3,700. Ref: Natri (Fin)
Aarhus 6-1 on agg

Barcelona 1 (Roberto 26 pen)
Lech Poznan 1 (Pachelski 71)
HT: 1-0. Att: 30,000. Ref: King (Wal)

Lech Poznan 1 (Kruszynski 30pen)
Barcelona 1 (Roberto 45)
HT: 1-1. Att: 25,000. Ref: Deda (Tur)
Barcelona 5-4 on pens: 1-1 on gg after extra time

CFKA v RODA

FIRST ROUND

Inter Bratislava 2 (Moravec 44, Weiss 58pen)
CFKA Sredets 3 (Penev 36, 38pen, 78)

CFKA Sredets 5 (Penev 1, Stoichkov 3, Kostadinov 12, 38, Getov 21)
Inter Bratislava 0
CFKA 8-2 on agg

Roda JC Kerkrade 2 (Groenendijk 6, Van Loen 87)
Vitoria Guimaraes 0

Vitoria Guimaraes 1 (Roldao 27)
Roda Kerkrade 0
Roda 2-1 on agg

SECOND ROUND

CFKA Sofia 2 (Stoichkov 44, Penev 89 pen)
Panathiniakos 0

Panathinaikos 0
CFKA Sofia 1 (Penev 85)
HT: 0-0. Att: 60,000. Ref: Hackett (Eng)
CFKA 3-0 on agg

Roda JC Kerkrade 1 (Van der Luer 43)
Metallist Kharkov 0

Metallist Kharkov 0
Roda JC Kerkrade 0
Att: 40,000. Ref: Germanakos (Gr)
Roda win 1-0 on agg

DINAMO v SAMPDORIA

FIRST ROUND

Dinamo Bucharest 3 (Jantti og 12, Andone 72, Vaiscovici 75)
Kuusysi Lahti 0

Kuusysi Lahti 0
Dinamo Bucharest 3 (Vaiscovici 11, 34, Raducioui 71)
Dinamo 6-0 on agg

Norrkoping 2 (Patrik Andersson 9, Jan Hellstrom 86)
Sampdoria 1 (Amedo Carboni 50)

Sampdoria 2 (Salsano 37, Vialli 80)
Norrkoping 0
Sampdoria 3-2 on agg

SECOND ROUND

Dundee Utd 0
Dinamo Bucharest 1 (Mateut 89)

Dinamo Bucharest 1 (Mateut 83)
Dundee Utd 1 (Beaumont 79)
Dinamo 2-1 on agg

Carl Zeiss Jena 1 (Weber 38)
Sampdoria 1 (Vialli 83 pen)

Sampdoria 3 (Vierchowod 24, Toninho Cerezo 42, Vialli 53)
Carl Zeiss Jena 1 (Raab 50)
Sampdoria 4-2 on agg

EINTRACHT v MECHELEN

FIRST ROUND

Grasshoppers 0
Eintracht Frankfurt 0

Eintracht Frankfurt 1 (Bakalorz 32)
Grasshopper 0
Frankfurt 1-0 on agg

Mechelen 5 (E.Koeman 59, Bosman 61pen, 84, Den Boer 77, Ohana 88pen)
Avenir Beggen 0

Avenir Beggen 1 (Krings 65)
Mechelen 3 (Bosman 34, Den Boer 51, Versavel 62)
Mechelen 8-1 on agg

SECOND ROUND

Eintracht Frankfurt 3 (Sievers 9, Balzis 33, Studer 44)
Sakaryaspor 1 (Kemal 87 pen)

Sakaryaspor 0
Eintracht Frankfurt 3 (Sievers 8, 65, Binz 35)
Frankfurt 6-1 on agg

Mechelen 1 (Wilmots 89)
Anderlecht 0

Anderlecht 0
Mechelen 2 (Koeman 18, Ohana 46)
Mechelen 3-0 on agg

Quarter-finals
(To be played March 1 and 15)

THE Cup-winners' Cup has become very much Europe's third club competition. This season again the field is distinctly down-market — with a few obvious exceptions. Johan Cruyff's BARCELONA provide the competition's glamour and the Catalan outfit should have few problems disposing of the Danes from AGF AARHUS- whether England's Gary Lineker can finally rediscover his 1986 vintage shooting boots or not. Barcelona have twice won the Cup-winners' Cup and their fans must fancy their prospects of completing the hat-trick. Cruyff himself may appear a valuable talisman. After all, it is less than two years ago that he was guiding Ajax Amsterdam to victory. The main threat to Barcelona is clearly provided by the Belgian holders, MECHELEN. The success of his unfashionable club in first triumphing over Ajax last year and then inflicting a decisive defeat on PSV Eindhoven in the Supercup has drawn the attention of a lot of Europe's spies. Real Madrid, for example, are reported to be considered an offer for goalkeeper Michel Preud'homme. But it is much more likely that their 'real' target is Dutch coach Aad de Mos. Mechelen should not have too many problems reaching the semi-finals at the expense of West Germany's crisis-hit EINTRACHT FRANKFURT. The long Bulgarian winter break may be a handicap for CFKA SOFIA against yet another Dutch contenders, RODA JC. But the most interesting tie is the one which matches Rumania's high-scoring league leaders DINAMO BUCHAREST with a SAMPDORIA side inspired by the brilliant form of Italy's Gianluca Vialli.

FOLLOW THE EUROPEAN TRAIL WITH WORLD SOCCER

MECHELEN'S WARNING

From KEIR RADNEDGE

MECHELEN, virtually unheard-of a year ago, are going from strength to strength.

Whatever the opposition ranged against them in the Cup-winners' Cup few people would bet against the unfashionable Belgian club becoming the first team in the history of the competition to successfully defend their crown.

The progress being made under Dutch coach Aad de Mos was emphatically demonstrated in the way Mechelen pushed aside European champions PSV Eindhoven to win the European Supercup.

The Supercup has had a chequered history. Originally it was launched with the impetus provided by Ajax Amsterdam who decided that a European event would be somewhat safer than the limb-shattering clashes provided by the likes of Racing Club and Estudiantes in the World Club Cup.

So the Supercup has been both escape route and money-spinner. It has also been an occasional irritant for clubs who really had more than enough on their fixtures' plate.

An attempt to turn the Supercup into a single-match event, fixed in Monaco, appears to have proved a failure.

Monaco authorities were first reluctant to go ahead with the game if there were an English team present, for fear of the hooligan consequences.

Then, when the English potential for trouble had been removed, Monaco's 'reward' for a first match was Steaua v Kiev which attracted very little general interest, few fans and few sponsors.

FC Porto took the Supercup back to the home-and-away format in 1987-88 when they beat Ajax to become the first team to land the treble — of Champions' Cup, World Club Cup and European Supercup.

PSV Eindhoven looked strong contenders to match Porto. But, having struggled past Benfica on penalties in the Champions' Cup Final last year, they succumbed to poetic justice by losing the World Club Cup final to Nacional of Uruguay by those very means in December.

Mechelen then further punctured Dutch ambitions in the Supercup.

The Eindhoven set-up was not quite at its smoothest. There was all the speculation about Ronald Koeman's transfer talks with Barcelona as well concern over injuries to goalkeeper Hans Van Breukele and striker Wim Kieft.

Ironically, it was a Dutchman, former Ajax star John Bosman, who took devastating advantage to lay the foundations for PSV's defeat and Mechelen's triumph.

He scored twice in the first leg in Belgium as Mechelen sliced through the PSV defence with surprising ease. Mechelen coach Aad de Mos was delighted, saying: "That was top-class attacking football."

It was a pity only 7,000 fans turned out to see the Belgian holders of the Cup-winners' Cup catching PSV unsettled by injuries and transfer speculation.

Another Dutchman helped Bosman provide the initial breakthrough. Wim Hofkens curled in a free kick and Bosman was unmarked to shoot home past Patrick Lodewijks — PSV's deputy for knee injury victim Hans Van Breukelen.

One minute later and MarcEmmers organised another decisive attack to which Pascal De Wildeput the finishing touch, via a Stan Valckx deflection.

As PSV coach Guus Hiddink said: "They simply outplayed us early on."

And when PSV did rouse themselves to strive to get back into the match Ronald Koeman's long-range shooting plus efforts from Eric Gerets and Soren Lerby all forced fine saves from Michel Preud'homme.

Five minutes into the second half and Mechelen struck again. Midfielder Bruno Versavel found space on the left and again Bosman was on hand to score from close range.

It could have been four, but PSV's veteran Belgian skipper Eric Gerets cleared off the line from De Wilde.

Mechelen clearly were not disturbed, in morale organisation, by the loss of injured Leo Clijsters.

The Belgian Footballer of the Year will probably not be able to play again until the end of the season.

Instead it was PSV's defence which appeared the more ragged at the edges and, in the second leg back home in Holland, PSV presented a glimpse of the future as their new Czech signing, Josef Chovanec, lined up at the centre of defence alongside the man he has been signed to succeed, Ronald Koeman.

Chovanec has developed a more defensive style than Koemanbut that did not worry him. He was more concerned about his recovery from a knee injury suffered in a friendly a month earlier would affect what was his competitive debut for the Dutch champions.

In the event he need not have worried even if PSV did not stage the storming team comeback for which their fans had hoped.

A goal 12 minutes from time by Hans Gillhaus, deputising for the injured Wim Kieft, had no effect on the ultimate destination of the Supercup.

Long before then Mechelen had set out their stall in such a way as to leave no doubt about their overall superiority.

PSV's internal disturbances had clearly had an effect on the team although they dominated the first half with Koeman and Gerald Vanenburg creating several early openings.

Some fine goalkeeping by Preud'homme kept the Dutchmen at bay and it was not until the 57th minute that they came closest to going in front.

Koen Sanders fouled Juul Ellerman in the penalty box but Koeman drove his kick powerfully wild.

Ellerman's persistence was rewarded eventually when Gillhaus rose to head home his cross for a PSV consolation.

That was one of the few occasions on which the Mechelen defence was embarrassed by the European champions despite not only the absence, of course, of Clijsters but the enforced substitution after 35 minutes of Marc Emmers.

He bruised ribs in a collision with his own goalkeeper — shades of Pfaff and Gerets at the 1982 World Cup!

Mechelen coach de Mos was delighted with his men. He said: "We mastered PSV very effectively."

As for PSV chief Hiddink, the after-match reflections were used as a damage-limitation exercise.

He said: "I'm satisfied with the way we approached the game and the way we played generally. Against a team as well-organised as Mechelen it was really expecting rather a lot to believe we could pull level on aggregate.

"Even so, if there was one area in which we might be criticised it was in not taking full advantage of all the openings which presented themselves."

EUROPEAN SUPERCUP 1988-89

Mechelen — 1st leg (Feb 1)
Mechelen 3 (John Bosman 17 and 50, Pascal De Wilde 18)
PSV Eindhoven 0
HT: 2-0. **Att:** 7,000. **Ref:** Kirschen (EG)

Mechelen: Preud'homme — Sanders, Emmers, Rutjes, Versavel, Hofkens, E.Koeman, De Wilde, Bosman, De Mesmaeker, Den Boer.

PSV: Lodewijks — Gerets, R.Koeman, Valckx, Veldman — Van Aerle, Lerby, Vanenburg — Romario, Gillhaus, Janssen.

Eindhoven — 2nd leg (Feb 8)
PSV Eindhoven 1 (Gillhaus 78)
Mechelen 0
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 17,100. **Ref:** Fredriksson (Swe)
Mechelen 3-1 on agg

PSV Eindhoven: Lodewijks — Gerets, Chovanec, R.Koeman, Heintze, Van Aerle, Linskens (Valckx 66), Vanenburg, Romario, Ellerman, Gillhaus.

Mechelen: Preud'homme — Sanders, Emmers (E.Koeman 35), Rutjes, Versavel, Hofkens, Deferm, De Wilde, Bosman, De Mesmaeker, Den Boer.

Finalists: 3 — Ajax Amsterdam, Kiev Dynamo, Liverpool. 2 — Anderlecht, Barcelona, Bayern Munich, Hamburg, Nottingham Forest. 1 — Aberdeen, Aston Villa, Juventus, Mechelen, Milan, FC Porto, PSV Eindhoven, Rangers, Steaua Bucharest, Valencia.

Honours list: 2 — Ajax Amsterdam, Anderlecht, Kiev Dynamo. 1 — Aberdeen, Aston Villa, Juventus, Liverpool, Mechelen, Nottingham Forest, FC Porto, Steaua Bucharest, Valencia.

GARY LINEKER. . . ultimate threat to Mechelen?

UEFA CUP . . .

HEARTS v BAYERN MUNICH

FIRST ROUND

St Patrick's Athletic 0
Hearts 2 (Foster 14 pen, Galloway 41)

Hearts 2 (Black 24, Galloway 67)
St Patrick's Athletic 0
Hearts 4-0 on agg

Bayern Munich 3 (Wegmann 9, Thon 23, 60)
Legia Warsaw 1 (Iwanicki 57)

Legia Warsaw 3 (Kubicki 36, Robakiewicz 85, 88)
Bayern Munich 7 (Nachtweih 20, Ekstrtm 23, 44, Augenthaler 41, Wegmann 78, 82, Eck 89)
Bayern 10-4 on agg

SECOND ROUND

Hearts 0
FK Austria 0

FK Austria 0
Hearts 1 (Galloway 58)
Hearts win 1-0 on agg

Bayern Munich 3 (Flick 21, Wegmann 53, Thon 75)
Dunajska Streda 1 (Szaban 77)

Dunajska Streda 0
Bayern Munich 2 (Thon 4 pen and 29)
Bayern Munich 5-1 on agg

THIRD ROUND

Hearts 3 (Bannon 17, Galloway 55, Colquhoun 89)
Velez Mostar 0

Velez Mostar 2 (Tuce 31, Gudelj 89)
Hearts 1 (Galloway 53)
Hearts 4-2 on agg

Bayern Munich 0
Internazionale 2 (Serena 59, Berti 71)

Internazionale 1 (Serena 44)
Bayern Munich 3 (Wohlfarth 33, Augenthaler 37, Wegmann 39)
Bayern on away goals: 3-3 agg

JUVENTUS v NAPOLI

FIRST ROUND

Otelul Galati 1 (Profir 59 pen)
Juventus 0

Juventus 5 (De Agostini 17, Agiu og 26, Rui Barros 28, 71, Altobelli 49)
Otelul Galati 0
Juventus 5-1 on agg

Napoli 1 (Maradona 58pen)
PAOK Salonika 0

PAOK Salonika 1 (Skartados 65)
Napoli 1 (Careca 17)
Napoli 2-1 on agg

SECOND ROUND

Juventus 5 (Laudrup 3, 51, Galia 23, Mauro 40, Altobelli 46)
Bilbao 1 (Uralde 35)

Bilbao 3 (Uralde 51, Andrinua 57, 69)
Juventus 2 (Laudrup 35, Gallia 76)
Juventus 7-4 on agg

Lok Leipzig 1 (Zimmerling 69)
Napoli 1 (Francini 75)

Napoli 2 (Francini 2, De Napoli 61)
Lok Leipzig 0
Napoli 3-1 on agg

THIRD ROUND

Liege 0
Juventus 1 (Altobelli 18)

Juventus 1 (Altobelli 14)
FC Liege 0
Juventus 2-0 on agg

Bordeaux 0
Napoli 1 (Carnevale 6)

Napoli 0
Bordeaux 0
Napoli 1-0 on agg

. . . THE LAST EIGHT

STUTTGART v R. SOCIEDAD

FIRST ROUND

Stuttgart 2 (Gaudino 49, Walter 58)
Tatabanya 0

Tatabanya 2 (Csapo 54, Schmidt 82)
Stuttgart 1 (Allgower 78pen)
Stuttgart 3-2 on agg

Real Sociedad 2 (Loinaz 38, 47)
Dukla Praha 1 (Bazant 39)

Dukla Praha 3 (Jiri Nemec 17, Ales Foldyna 55, Gunther Bittengel 72)
Real Sociedad 2 (Lorenzo Loren 75, Miguel Loinaz 82)
Real Sociedad on away goals, 4-4

SECOND ROUND

Dinamo Zagreb 1 (Besek 79)
Stuttgart 3 (Klinsmann 44, Walter 51, Schroder 63)

Stuttgart 1 (Walter 48)
Dinamo Zagreb (Mihajlovic 66)
Stuttgart 4-2 on agg

Sporting Lisbon 1 (Paulinho Cascavel 31 pen)
Real Sociedad 2 (Iturrino 16, Loren 50)

Real Sociedad 0
Sporting Lisbon 0
Real Sociedad win 2-1 on agg

THIRD ROUND

Groningen 1 (Meijer 81)
Stuttgart 3 (Allgtwer 17, Gaudino 32, 39)

Stuttgart 2 (Klinsmann 22, 52)
Groningen 0
Stuttgart 5-1 on agg

Real Sociedad 1 (Loinaz 76)
Koln 0

Koln 2 (Gttz 2, Engels 28)
Real Sociedad 2 (Goicoechea 35pen, Fuentes 89)
Real Sociedad 3-2 on agg

V. BUCHAREST v D. DRESDEN

FIRST ROUND

Sliema Wanderers 0
Victoria Bucharest 2 (Culcear 35, Solomon 59 pen)

Victoria Buch. 6 (Cojocaru 12, 41, Coras 16, 39, 43, Lais 88)
Sliema W. 1 (M.Gauci 89)
Victoria 8-1 on agg

Aberdeen 0
Dynamo Dresden 0

Dynamo Dresden 2 (Thorsten Gutschow 4, Ulf Kirsten 66)
Aberdeen 0
Dresden 2-0 on agg

SECOND ROUND

Minsk Dynamo 2 (Gurinovich 44, Zigmantovich 78)
Victoria Bucharest 1 (Kulchar 58)

Victoria Bucharest 1
Minsk Dynamo 0
Victoria on away goals rule: agg 2-2

Dynamo Dresden 4 (Kirchner 11, Kirsten 23, 39, 64)
Waregem 1 (Niederbacher 83)

Waregem 2 (Niederbacher 8, Van Baekel 47)
Dynamo Dresden 1 (Uwe Pilz 53pen)
Dresden 5-3 on agg

THIRD ROUND

Victoria Bucharest 1 (Ursu 4)
TPs 0

TPs 3 (Rajamaki 36, Halonen 51, Jalo 89)
Victoria Bucharest 2 (Solomon 16 and 25)
Victoria on away goals: 3-3 agg

Dynamo Dresden 2 (Gutschow 15 pen, Minge 81)
Roma 0

Roma 0
Dynamo Dresden 2 (Gutschow 69, Kirsten 79)
Dresden 4-0 on agg

Quarter-finals
(To be played March 1 and 15: except Hearts v Bayern on Feb 28 and March 14)

THE all-Italian tie between JUVENTUS and NAPOLI is one of the features of the entire European quarter-final programme — never mind 'just' the UEFA Cup. Earlier this season Diego Maradona's Napoli swept to a thrilling league victory in the Stadio Comunale in Turin. It is unlikely, given the special constraints of a European two-leg tie, that Maradona and Careca will provide a repeat. But it is undeniable that while Juventus make slow progress towards the integration of Alexander Zavarov in midfield, Napoli are going from strength to strength. They are one of Europe's in-form teams and should not only account for Juve but go all the way on to their first European final. BAYERN MUNICH appear as their most threatening prospective opposition and, given their league-leading form in the Bundesliga plus their brilliant overturning of Inter Milan in the UEFA Cup third round, should carry too much power for HEARTS. The other West Germans, from STUTTGART, could find John Toshack's REAL SOCIEDAD difficult opponents, however. Real Sociedad have demonstrated both against Dukla in the first round and against Koln in the third that they can strike decisive blows right up until the final whistle. The all-East European tie looks like providing a last fling for Rumania's VICTORIA BUCHAREST. Inspired by Marcel Coras they have performed exceptionally to reach the last eight. But the experience and confidence of East Germany's revived DYNAMO DRESDEN should be too much. Dresden demonstrated their potential with that home-and-away victory over Roma.

BAYERN'S MERRY DANCE

By TIM MANSEL

BAYERN MUNICH have once again flourished the chequebook to prise the country's top defender Jurgen Kohler away from Koln — despite having conceded the fewest goals in the Bundesliga up to this season's halfway point.

Quite where 23-year-old Kohler will fit into an already formidable defence is not immediately clear, although the problem won't arise until the summer when the former Waldhof Mannheim stopper, capped more than 20 times at full international level, arrives in Munich.

Kohler's signing for 3.1 million DM underlines the determination of Bayern manager Uli Hoeness to re-establish the club as a dominant force in Europe.

Bundesliga champions ten times overall and five times in the eighties, Bayern have had a relatively lean time in European competitions since the mid-seventies when they won the European Cup three times in successive years, with Hoeness himself in midfield.

They reached the final in 1982 and 1987, when they lost to Aston Villa and FC Porto respectively.

This year Bayern are, as they say in Germany, "dancing at three weddings". Having finished as bridesmaids last year, the Bundesliga is the one they all want to win to qualify for next season's European Cup.

Many would also like to see the club win the UEFA Cup, the only major trophy they have yet failed to capture.

The DFB Pokal, the domestic cup competition, lacks the magic of, for example, the English FA Cup, but does provide an alternative passage to Europe.

That Bayern have conceded just 11 goals in the league this year bears witness to the development of goalkeeper Raimond Aumann, 25, in his first full season as first choice following the departure of Jean-Marie Pfaff last summer.

Aumann has been with the club since 1980, but had been restricted up to the beginning of this season to 40 league appearances.

He finally presented the club with the ultimatum: "Either I play or I go."

And trainer Jupp Heynckes made the brave, and at the time unpopular, decision to let Pfaff go instead.

It is a decision which has paid handsome dividends. Aumann, who trains regularly with Sepp Maier, has performed superbly all season, and produced heroics in Inter Milan's San Siro stadium in December to enable Bayern to pull off an astonishing 3-1 win to cancel out their 2-0 home defeat in the first leg of a UEFA Cup tie.

Former Bayern trainer Udo Lattek, now a columnist, is just one of many calling for Aumann's inclusion in Franz Beckenbauer's next international squad.

He received his first call-up for a friendly against the USSR last autumn, at a time when the Olympic squad was in Seoul and the recognised No.2 behind Bodo Illgner, Nurnberg's Andy Kopke, was injured.

It is Aumann's bad luck that there is no shortage of goalkeeping talent in West Germany at the moment.

Bayern's win in Milan was just reward for the bold tactic of fielding three strikers, which paid off when both Roland Wohlfarth and Jurgen Wegmann scored, Swede Johnny Ekstrom setting up Wegmann's strike.

Yet it is a tactic unlikely to be repeated in the Bundesliga, so Wohlfarth, Wegmann and Ekstrom are going to have to continue the battle for the two places.

Ekstrom is probably holding the worst hand at the moment, as he is still having trouble adapting to West German football following his move from Empoli last summer.

He had just four league goals to his name up to the winter break, and blotted his copybook badly when he was sent off in a cup game against unknown amateurs TuS Hoisdorf.

The unluckiest player of the season must be midfield international Hans Dorfner who, having re-established himself in the side after an early-season injury, picked up another during an indoor tournament in January, which meant another eight weeks on the sideline.

Midfield is another department where there is no shortage of talent, with Olaf Thon, Stephan Reuter, Hansi Flick, Armin Eck and Wiggerl Kogl all competing for places.

Competition will be no less stern next season when 20-year-old Thomas Strunz arrives from amateurs MSV Duisburg, while strong rumours are hinting that Nurnberg's international midfielder Manni Schwabl is poised for a return to the club he left in 1986.

If that move does go ahead, it will do little to improve the already strained relationships between the two Bavarian clubs. Nurnberg president Gerd Schmelzer is widely known to blame Bayern for his own club's plummet in fortunes this season, following the dual sale of Stephan Reuter and Roland Grahammer last year. Dorfner is another former Nurnberger now playing in Munich.

HE is, to quote himself, "the most poisonous of poisonous snakes". He has, of course, been dubbed "the Cobra" by the press and he has bitten quite a few defences this season in Bayern Munich's march to the top of the Bundesliga, the quarter-finals of the UEFA Cup and the last sixteen of the DFB Pokal.

Jurgen Wegmann, 24, is Bayern's top scorer this season with eight goals in 17 league outings and a further six in five UEFA Cup ties.

Last year he notched 13 in 27 league games. A record which speaks for itself, yet one which is more remarkable, given the fact that he started many of those games on the substitute's bench.

That is exactly where he began this season and, despite coming on as substitute in Hamburg to score the only goal in a 1-0 win, it wasn't until Bayern's sixth league game that he forced his way in to replace Swede Johnny Ekstrom.

He promptly struck twice in a 3-0 home win over Borussia Moenchengladbach.

It was during this period that he decided to lift himself by going into every game and every training session telling himself he was "the most poisonous of poisonous snakes."

The press loved it, although it still hasn't guaranteed the Cobra his regular place.

"But I regard myself as a first-team regular because of my performances, so there's no problem," he claims.

Among those eight league goals was one that will live in the memory for some years, and which was with justification voted Goal of the Year 1988 in West Germany, beating even Marco van Basten's stunning volley in the final of the European Championships.

Words cannot do justice to such a feat of improvisation and agility.

Wegmann was lurking near the edge of the 18-yard box during a home game against Nurnberg in November when a somewhat hopeful through ball was floated in over his right shoulder.

Somehow keeping his eye on the ball, Wegmann swivelled and produced a scissor-kicked volley at shoulder height which the goalkeeper never saw.

"It all happened so quickly that it wasn't until afterwards that I realised what a spectacular goal it was," he said.

"I was really pleased finally to score a goal like that in a match and not just in training."

Yet, in true 'take-each-game-as-it-comes' style, he insists that it is all behind him.

"I was very pleased about the award, but that's all forgotten, it doesn't matter now. I'm just concentrating on our next game."

This is Wegmann all over — a mixture of humility and diffidence, who likes nothing better then the occasional spot of trumpet-blowing.

Last season he never tired of reminding journalists of the superiority of his goals to minutes-played ratio, compared to that of his fellow Bayern strikers.

Although he denies it — "I regard myself as a first-team regular" — the frustration of sitting on the bench is clearly there.

"Or course it's my target to be the Bundesliga's leading goalscorer. But I can only achieve that when I get the same opportunities as other rival strikers," he says.

"In other words, that at the end of the season, I have played exactly the same number of games as the other leading goalscorers and not ten to 15 fewer, as was the case last year. That way I have no chance of finishing at the top."

A native of the industrial Ruhr district, Wegmann was offered his first chance in professional football by his hometown club Rot-Weiss Essen.

After spells with Borussia Dortmund and Schalke 04, he arrived in Munich in the summer of 1987. He also has four under-21 caps, all won in 1984-85 during his time in Dortmund.

Today, when asked about his international prospects, he is immediately the self-effacing Jurgen Wegmann.

"It's obviously a dream for every player to play for his country. But as I see it, I haven't yet earned a call-up. But of course I hope the day will come when I do earn the chance."

From ARTHUR ROTMIL and SIMON KUPER

FRANZ: I'D RESIGN

HOLLAND face West Germany in their all-important World Cup return next month. But already two men are feeling the pressure . . .

WEST GERMANY'S national team chief Franz Beckenbauer has never experienced — and is not likely to suffer — the kind of pressure that England manager Bobby Robson is enduring.

But he says bluntly: "If the German team doesn't qualify for the World Cup finals, then I shall resign."

Of course, Kaiser Franz is conscious of the obligation he carries as the team's leader in a country which has never failed to reach the decisive stage of the world championship.

Indeed, the Germans have in their entire history only lost one single qualifying match!

But Beckenbauer is confident that his charges will confirm the promise and emerge successfully from a tough group, which also includes European Champions Holland, awkward Wales and sometimes unpredictable Finland.

Promising

He says: "We now have a young and highly promising team.

"During the European Championships, we fielded a side with an average age of 24.5 — much too young for a national team.

"The best average is about 27 when the players have more experience."

In a special interview, West Germany's boss and his country's most-capped player (103 internationals) explains his optimism and is complimentary about the current state of German club football.

THE Chief of the Bundesliga executive committee, Herr Mayer-Vorfelder, demands that foreign-based players should not represent the country. Do you agree?

I think we simply cannot ignore, provided they are fit, players like Rudi Voller.

Lothar Matthaus, too, is an exceptional footballer with nearly 70 internationals behind him.

Andreas Brehme is also top class. Where would we find better players?

WHAT can be done to stop the exodus abroad? Does Germany not have an industry generous enough to help keep the stars at home?

Of course, there are many enterprises who already support various sports but don't invest in football.

There are already numerous sponsors but certainly there is not the financial potential as, for example, there is in Italy.

The French are being helped by state grants, otherwise they couldn't exist. Why doesn't our Government do something?

We can't compete with Italian wages, where footballers earn three times as much after deductions as a German player does before tax.

What can I say to our young players asking for advice on whether to emigrate?

RUDI VOLLER . . . a key man, says Beckenbauer

WHAT do you expect to happen in the formidable World Cup group?

We've got the toughest group of all but our team does have a chance.

Of course, we must not lose in Holland (26 April in Rotterdam) but these encounters are always highly emotional, as old rivalries are being recalled and scores settled.

ARE there any players who have not developed as well as you expected?

I am glad that Uwe Rahn is doing well in midfield for Koln. I count on him, as well as on defender Michael Frontzeck, but neither has convinced me at the highest level.

On the other hand, Andy Moller of Borussia Dortmund is the biggest find of the season.

IS there anything you'd change, mistakes you'd like to rectify?

Yes, there is always something which could have been handled differently. One is clever with hindsight.

THERE were lots of discussions about naming the team captain on a rota system. Was that an amicable solution?

The intention was misunderstood. Lothar Matthaus is still my captain, though the DFB thought that it would be better if a captain was based in the Bundesliga.

But I ask you, name one who is better qualifed than Lothar.

WERE there any other errors?

It was a pity that we included in the Olympic squad such first choice players as Klinsmann and Hassler, whom I have missed in full internationals.

But there were problems of eligibility for the Games in Seoul and so I had to let them go.

WEST German club football has been criticised in the first-half of the season. What do you say to that?

I have seen many games and only a few were poor. Most of them were good to very good.

Bayern Munich against VfB Stuttgart was super and Stuttgart versus Bremen was another top class game. I am pleased with the overall standard.

HAVE the European Championships influenced German football at all?

I cannot say that we should now try to copy the Dutch style, or the English, or anybody's for that matter.

We should play the kind of soccer we've always played and done well playing.

WHY was there a big drop in Bundesliga attendances?

Perhaps the fans were spoiled by the European Championships, in which the standard was exceptional.

Furthermore, the season began early during the holiday period while the Olympics caused a three-week break and thus irregular playing days.

HOW would you improve West German football?

I wouldn't change the rules but I would certainly reduce the Bundesliga's First Division to, at most, 16 clubs. The programme would be ideal, though if we're looking for quality, even a smaller league could be an advantage.

ABERDEEN goalkeeper Theo Snelders is poised to make his debut for Holland.

Snelders, signed by the Scottish club from Twente Enschede last summer, is likely to replace the injured Hans Van Breukelen in the Dutch goal for this spring's crucial internationals.

Van Breukelen is out for the rest of the season with a knee injury and with second choice Joop Hiele also injured, the way is clear for Snelders.

His only rival for the place is Ajax's Stanley Menzo. The choice is a difficult one but Holland manager Thijs Libregts considers Snelders the technically superior keeper of the two. And Snelders is also playing with consistent excellence for Aberdeen.

The Dons bought Snelders for just £300,000 after watching a video of him sent by the player's agent. They still can't believe their luck.

Aberdeen manager Alex Smith raves about his keeper: "He's made us forget Jim Leighton. And Leighton was a living legend.

"Theo is by far the best goalkeeper in Scotland. He belongs in the Dutch team, he belongs among players like Gullit, Van Basten, Rijkaard and Koeman."

Since Snelders made his professional debut in Holland at the age of 17, it has been clear that he's bound for the top.

Now, at 25, he has everything a keeper needs — he is athletic, tall, strong, brave and possesses perfect concentration and timing.

He is also a perfectionist. Van Breukelen comments: "Theo is always angry with himself when he lets in a goal.

"He takes it as a blow to his personal pride."

Snelders always carries on training after the other players have finished. "Football takes first place in my life," he says.

Aberdeen has made Snelders much more confident, both on and off the field.

In Holland, he was timid, shy and introvert, afraid of talking to journalists.

Now he is brash and lively. Libregts, who went to watch him in Aberdeen recently, is pleased with the change.

"There's a personality in goal now. Snelders has become a man," he says.

Libregts' one objection to Snelders is that in Scotland, he has stopped keeping in the Dutch style.

British goalkeepers only deal with balls in their six-yard box, leaving the rest to their centre-halves. This is how Snelders is playing now.

The Dutch style, which Libregts wants to see in the national team, is for a keeper to come out even beyond his penalty area. Menzo is a master of this.

Snelders believes he can still play the Dutch way. "I can keep outside the penalty area. I always did in Holland and I haven't lost that," he says.

"It's like cycling. Nobody in Scotland cycles but whenever I'm back in Holland, I get on a bike again."

Holland meet the USSR in a friendly on March 22. Menzo and Snelders will probably get half-a-match each and then Libregts will pick his goalkeeper for the crucial World Cup qualifier against West Germany on April 26.

Van Breukelen is already 32 and, sadly, it seems unlikely that he will ever return to the highest level after his injury.

Whoever plays against West Germany could well be in the team for years. Snelders is hopeful.

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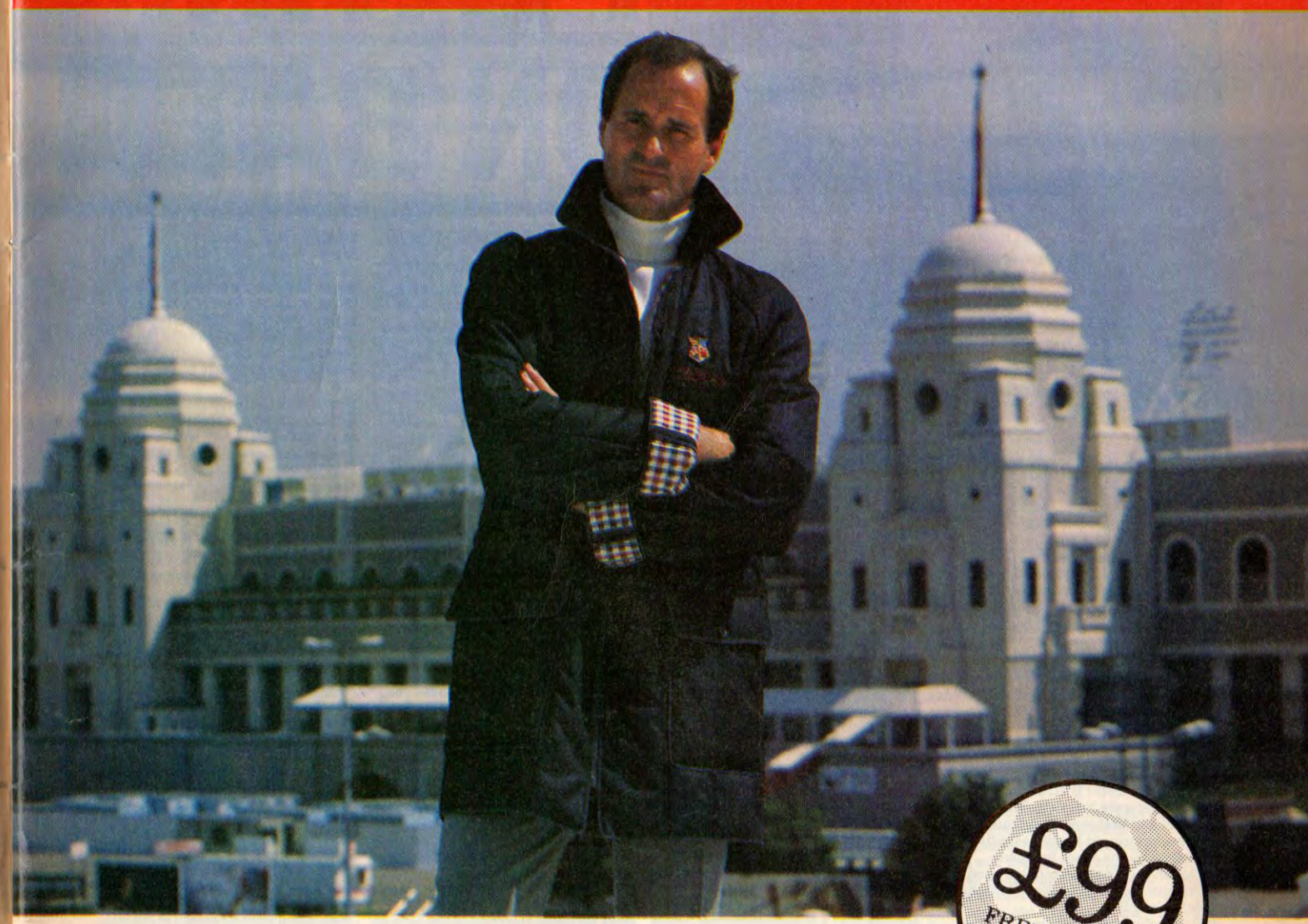

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WORLD SOCCER PREVIEWS FRANCE'S VISIT TO SCOTLAND ON MARCH 8

PLATINI GAMBLES ON BATTISTON . . .

by KEIR RADNEDGE

FRANCE manager Michel Platini admits he is taking a gamble in recalling veteran defender Patrick Battiston for the all-important World Cup visit to face Scotland at Hampden on March 8.

Battiston had given up his national team ambitions after the World Cup finals in Mexico.

He had played three World Cups and he was content to concentrate his ageing forces on a club career with Bordeaux and then Monaco.

Platini, as we know, has had other ideas. Not through easy choice but under pressure of keeping alive French hopes of qualifying for their fourth successive World Cup.

Battiston made his return in the goalless draw against the Irish Republic in Dublin but Platini was none too happy at having to go into the 'Hampden Trial' — the test against Arsenal at Highbury — without his Monaco men.

That was all due to an agreement settled at the end of last year when the federation agreed not to push the Monegasques too hard in the weeks leading up to their Champions' Cup quarter-final against Galatasaray.

At the time, Platini had not completed his plans on how to prepare for the Scots. By the time the Arsenal match had been arranged it was much too late.

On the evidence of Dublin the French are ready to abandon their traditional four or even three-man back row in favour of a five-man block incorporating three centre-backs.

No wonder Platini regretted the absence of a further chance to test his tactic under British conditions.

Experience is invaluable at this level and that conclusion must have impressed Platini especially, following the latest escapade involving French football's most talented youngster, Eric Cantona, of Marseille.

Cantona was outstanding when France eliminated England from the European under-21 championship at the semi-final stage at Highbury last season.

But he was then suspended from all national team involvement for the season for grossly offensive remarks about Platini's managerial predecessor, Henri Michel.

If Cantona had kept his nose clean there was a real prospect of early forgiveness. But Cantona wrecked that hope with his antics in a winter break club match against Tbilisi Dynamo which was staged to raise funds for the Armenia earthquake appeal.

When Cantona twice failed to control the ball in front of goal he was jeered.

His response was to hammer the ball into the crowd and, when the referee ran over to give him a ticking-off, he ripped off his jersey, flung it at the official and stormed from the pitch.

Marseille technical director Michel Hidalgo later suspended Cantona indefinitely and he has now been sent on loan to Bordeaux.

One thing, however, was clear. There was no way Cantona could be considered eligible to fulfil any role with the national team either in the short or long term.

Thus the heaviest weight of responsibility for pulling France round in Glasgow rests with 'old men' Jean Tigana and Battiston.

Tigana is now 33, his elder statesman role a far cry from the struggles of his childhood. Born in Bamako, Mali, Tigana was brought up — along with nine brothers and sisters — in Marseille and as soon as he could leave school began work in a spaghetti factory to help support the family.

After that Tigana found work as a postman — work to which he attributes the remarkable stamina which carries him easily through league and international competition at an age when most players are hanging up their boots.

But then, Tigana has had to make up for lost time because he did not turn professional footballer until he signed for Toulon at the age of 20.

Sensation

Even then he was no overnight sensation. Toulon decided they had made a mistake and were about to give Tigana away to third division Martigues when first division Lyon stepped in to offer him a trial.

Tigana impressed then coach Aime Jacquet, even though a foot injury was nagging him. Only after he signed for Lyon was an ankle fracture diagnosed!

Under Jacquet Tigana's career took off. In 1980 he made his France debut in a 1-0 defeat by the Soviet Union in Moscow.

He followed Jacquet to Bordeaux and took his midfield partnership with clubmate Alain Giresse to the World Cups of 1982 and 1986 and to glory in the 1984 European championship.

Naturally, Tigana became a transfer target for the rich and famous.

Tottenham were among interested clubs but Bordeaux never wanted to sell. Tigana was beyond monetary value. President Claude Bez refused even to consider wildly extravagant offers from Italy.

So Tigana settled back to concentrate on his career with Bordeaux. He retired from the national team scene after the last World Cup.

But that, on top of the retirements of Giresse and Platini, was more than France could stand. That's why Platini persuaded Tigana to return.

And Tigana's immense contribution to reviving morale, even in defeat, in Yugoslavia last November prompted Platini's move to bring Battiston, too, out of the clubland shadows.

However Tigana missed the Dublin trip because of injury and Battiston was absent from Highbury.

Platini is doubtless doing his best but the French camp is not currently bubbling over with optimism.

THE MANAGER

Michel PLATINI. Aged 32 (born June 21, 1955). Retired from playing in 1987 having won 72 caps for France (scoring a record 41 goals). Platini began his career with French second division club Nancy-Lorraine where his father , Aldo, was on the coaching staff. Did not become a first division regular with them until 1976 , when he also helped France reach the Olympic Games quarter-finals in Montreal and made his senior intl debut in a 2-2 draw against Czechoslovakia in March. He scored the second goal for a French team which included later manager Henri Michel. After playing in the 1978 World Cup finals, Platini moved to Saint-Etienne. He won the French league with them then transferred to Juventus (ousting Liam Brady) after the 1982 World Cup finals. In those finals in Spain Platini — despite a thigh injury — inspired France to the semi-finals where he was voted Official Man of the Match despite the dramatic defeat by West Germany. Top-scored with nine goals (including two hat-tricks) in the European championship triumph of 1984. He was league top scorer in each of his first three seasons in Italy and won, with Juventus, the World Club Cup, European Champions', Cup-winners' and Super Cups as well as the Italian league and cup. In December of 1985 Platini converted the decisive spot-kick in the penalty shoot-out victory over Argentinos Juniors in the World Club final in Tokyo. He was voted European Footballer of the Year (by France Football) for three seasons (a consecutive record) and World Player of the Year (by World Soccer) twice. When his business plans did not work out as well as expected after retirement he was tempted back into football, first as vice-president of Nancy, then as French national manager. This stunning appointment, in succession to Henri Michel, was engineered by the controversial Bordeaux president, Claude Bez, after a disappointing 1-1 World Cup draw in Cyprus.

THE PLAYERS

Joel BATS. Goalkeeper. Aged 32 (born January 4, 1957) with 44 caps. Paris Saint-Germain. Played previously for Sochaux and Auxerre. Poetry-writing goalkeeper who made his international debut in a 3-1 defeat by Denmark in a friendly at the start of the 1983-84 season. Played in all five finals matches when France won the European title the following year and has since proved the most consistent French keeper since Pierre Bernard in the early 1960s. Transferred from Auxerre to Paris Saint-Germain in 1985 and was a key figure in their 1986 league title success as well as in their championship bid this term. He was badly at fault in the 1986 World Cup semi-final when he mishandled the Andreas Brehme long shot which gave West Germany a decisive lead.

Bruno MARTINI. Goalkeeper. Aged 27 (born January 25, 1962) with six caps. Auxerre. Made his international debut as a substitute in a 2-1 defeat by West Germany in West Berlin in August, 1987, and is now pushing Bats hard to take over as top keeper. Joined Auxerre as a teenager, was promoted to the first-team squad in 1981 but made his league debut two years later while out on loan to Nancy.

Alain ROCHE. Right back. Aged 21 (born October 14, 1967) with two caps. Bordeaux. Roche was one of two new caps (Christian Perez was the other) called up by Michel Platini for his international managerial debut — last November's 3-2 World Cup defeat in Yugoslavia. Roche came through the Bordeaux youth system but his expulsion this season in a UEFA Cup third round defeat by Napoli raised doubts about his temperament.

Luc SONOR. Rightback. Aged 26 (born at Basse Terre, French Guadeloupe, in the Caribbean on Sept 15, 1962) with seven caps. Monaco. Made his France debut in a 1-1 European championship draw at home to Norway in October, 1987. Also played for France in the last Olympic qualifying series. Sonor joined Monaco, after seven years with Metz, in the summer of 1986. He had spent much of his career at centre-back but was switched to the right by coach Arsene Wenger with enormous success.

Manuel AMOROS. Right or left back. Aged 27 (born February 1, 1962) with 59 caps. Monaco — although he tried hard to get away three years ago. The club held him to a long-term contract after a legal battle. Born at Nimes of Spanish parents, who came originally from Alicante. Joined Monaco at the age of 13 and twice won the third division(south) title while simultaneously establishing a local reputation as a rugby player. Played for France at youth and under-21 level before being named as a surprise choice for the 1982 World Cup squad. Established himself in Spain and was a member of the team beaten by Poland in the third-place match. Attacking fullback with great skill but whose reputation suffered a setback in the 1984 European championships when he was sent off in the opening match of the finals for a foul on Denmark's Jesper Olsen. Was suspended for the next three games and made a token reappearance in the Final against Spain as a substitute for Battiston late in the game. One of the best fullbacks in Europe.

Basile BOLI. Centre back. Aged 22 (born January 2, 1967, in Adjame, Ivory Coast) with 16 caps. Auxerre. One of the most exciting players to emerge among the new generation in French football. Considered the 'new Tresor,' after the 1970s World Cup defender.

Sylvain KASTENDEUCH. Sweeper. Aged 25 (born August 31, 1963) with nine caps. Metz. Made his international debut at rightback against East Germany in November, 1987, when he was one of the few French successes in a 1-0 defeat in Paris. Now established in the centre of defence.

Patrick BATTISTON. Central defender. Aged 31 (born March 12, 1957) with 54 caps (three goals). Monaco. Recalled to the national squad after retiring from international football following the 1986 World Cup. Battiston is still best remembered probably as the victim of Toni Schumacher's awful — unpenalised — foul during the thrilling 1982 World Cup semi-final in Seville. Battiston suffered facial and spinal injuries and it was remarkable that he made a complete recovery and was a member of the European championship-winning side against Spain in 1984. Began with Metz, joining Saint-Etienne in 1980, Bordeaux in 1983 and Monaco a year ago as replacement for Denmark's Alf Busk.

William PRUNIER. Stopper. Aged 21 (born August 14, 1967) with no caps as yet. Auxerre. Called into the national squad for the first time for the match at Highbury as defensive cover should Platini agree to rest the Monaco men who face Galatasaray of Turkey in the Champions' Cup in two weeks' time. Prunier joined Auxerre as a 15-year-old.

Franck SILVESTRE. Centre back. Aged 21 (born April 5, 1967) with one cap — having made his international debut in the recent goalless draw against the Irish Republic in Dublin. Sochaux.

Bernard CASONI. Fullback. Aged 27 (born September 4, 1961) with six caps. Matra Racing Paris. Former under-21 international who made his senior debut as a substitute in a 2-1 win over Switzerland in February last year. Can play fullback, stopper or midfield.

Laurent BLANC. Midfield. Aged 23 (born November 19, 1965) with one cap. Montpellier. Called up into the national team for the first time for the 0-0 draw with the Irish Republic in Dublin. An under-21 international, Montpellier have been his only club.

Jean-Philippe DURAND. Midfield. Aged 28 (born November 11, 1960) with two caps. Toulouse. Local boy from Toulouse who made his international debut a year ago in a 2-1 win over Spain.

Franck SAUZEE. Midfield/attack. Aged 23 (born October 28, 1965) with five caps. Marseille. Former under-21 international who was a key member of the European junior title-winning side last year when he scored twice against Greece in the second leg of the final, which France won 3-0. Even before that success he had been signed by Marseille from Sochaux in a £1million-plus part-exchange deal. Sauzee then made his senior international debut at the start of this season.

Jean TIGANA. Midfield. Aged 33 (born June 23, 1955) with 52 caps (one goal). Bordeaux. Recalled to the national squad by manager Platini in time for the World Cup qualifier against Yugoslavia last November (which France lost 3-2). Tigana had previously retired from international football soon after the 1986 World Cup. Born in Bamako, Mali, but brought up in Marseille and played for Toulon and Lyon before his star quality emerged at Bordeaux.

Philippe VERCRUYSSE. Midfield. Aged 27 (born January 28, 1962) with 12 caps. Marseille. Began as a boy with Lens before working his way up to the professional ranks and a transfer to Bordeaux in 1986. Made his international debut as a substitute for the last four minutes of the 1-1 draw with Belgium in May 1983.

Jose TOURE. Midfield. Aged 27 (born April 24, 1961) with 16 caps. Monaco — whom he joined last summer from Bordeaux. Skilled, powerful attacker whose international chances have been restricted by injury. Prefers midfield though France have often used him at centre-forward when he has been fit. Nantes discovered him as a 15-year-old and he made his international debut against Yugoslavia in 1983.

Marcel DIB. Midfield. Aged 28 (born August 10, 1960) with one cap. Monaco. Born and brought up in Marseille but was discovered by Toulon. Made his first division debut for them against Rennes at the comparatively 'old' age of 23 and joined Monaco in the summer of 1985.

PATRICK BATTISTON . . . the man to silence Hampden.

Daniel BRAVO. Winger/midfield. Aged 26 (born February 9, 1963) with 12 caps. Nice. Returned to Nice, the club with whom he began as a teenager, two years ago after a spell with Monaco. Made his France debut in 1982 against Italy and was an important member of the European championship-winning squad two years later.

Christian PEREZ. Winger/striker. Aged 25 (born May 13, 1963) with one cap. Paris Saint-Germain. Left-footed forward who proved a revelation when called up for a surprise international debut by Platini for the World Cup-tie in Yugoslavia last November. Perez scored and was France's liveliest forward in the 3-2 defeat. Was discovered as a 14-year-old by Nimes and made a name for himself as a youth international by scoring a hat-trick in a Monaco tournament match against West Germany. Perez dropped into the shadows as Nimes then vacillated between first and second divisions and was eventually transferred in 1987 to Montpellier. When they qualified for this UEFA Cup it was decided that Perez was too raw and Montpellier signed experienced international winger Bruno Bellone. Perez was transfer-listed. Second division Lyon showed an interest but did not pursue it. Then along came Paris Saint-Germain. They were prepared to take Perez only on loan, not believing him worth the £300,000 set on his head by Montpellier. Under Yugoslav coach Tomislav Ivic, however, Perez has revelled in a free attacking role. Now he is worth around £1million — which means Paris SG may not be able to afford to buy him for keeps when his loan, and the season, end!

Stephane PAILLE. Striker. Aged 23 (born June 27, 1965) with six caps. Sochaux. One of the brightest new hopes of French football, a member of the triumphant European under-21 title-winning side and newly-crowned domestic Footballer of the Year. Discovered by third division Thonon, was signed by Sochaux as a 15-year-old and helped France win the European youth championship. Made his league debut at the age of 17 against Lille and his senior international debut in a goalless draw against Iceland in the last European championship qualifiers.

Jean-Pierre PAPIN. Striker. Aged 25 (born November 5, 1963) with 18 caps. Marseille. Began his career in France with Valenciennes and was their top scorer with 15 goals in the second division in 1983-84. These goals earned him a call-up for the French under-21 team but also a transfer to Belgian club Brugge, who needed a deputy for veteran Willy Wellens. Injury forced Wellens to miss the start of the season and Papin stepped up in style — scoring the goals which took Brugge to the top of the table, adding five more in the UEFA Cup, plus important goals against East Germany and Yugoslavia in the European under-21 championship. Papin returned to France after the Mexico World Cup — partly at the insistence of his wife who wanted to pick up her studies. Monaco appeared to have him signed and all but sealed but in the end he joined Marseille instead.

Daniel XUEREB. Wing. Aged 29 (born May 22, 1959) with four caps. Paris Saint-Germain. Joint top scorer — and gold medal winner under the management of Henri Michel — in the 1984 Olympic Games. The decisive second goal in the Final against Brazil (France won 2-0) was Xuereb's fifth of the tournament. Began with Lyon, moving to Lens in 1981 and then to current league title-chasers Paris Saint-Germain three years ago.

WHAT TO READ AND WHERE . . .

by BRIAN GLANVILLE

EVERY week, indeed almost every day, football magazines and sporting newspapers from abroad drop through my letterbox.

Immediately declaring an interest, I confess that I am virtually the English correspondent for the Corriere dello Sport, the Roman daily paper, which has been flourishing greatly under the editorship of Domenico Morace, though the Pink 'Un, Milan's Gazzetta, dello Sport, still has the highest circulation of the three Italian sports dailies (Tuttosport of Turin lag well behind) and rises some Mondays to above a million, an extraordinary sale by Italian standards.

I receive, besides, Don Balon, the polemical, multi-coloured, Barcelona weekly; the invaluable and incomparable France Football, still the very doyen of all football magazines; El Grafico, from Buenos Aires, and until recently, Placar from Brazil.

Obviously, I am well acquainted with L'Equipe, once known I believe as L'Auto, as well respected as its "nephew", France Football; with Kicker of West Germany; and with the two chief Spanish sports dailies, Marca of Madrid and Mundo Deportivo of Barcelona, whose splendid Anglophile editor, Juan Jose Castillo, recently retired, but still contributes his words of wisdom to Don Balon.

What all these publications have in common is that they treat their readers like educated adults, rather then illiterate cretins; or, to put it more kindly, children.

World Soccer honourably excepted, of what British publication could one say the same?

We have, of course, no sports daily, though the reasons for that are economic and unanswerable.

The massive circulations of our popular papers, their huge coverage of sport, appear to satisfy our sports fans. True, there is now heavy coverage of sport in the lesser-selling Italian "political" dailies, but the chief sports dailies go just the same from strength to strength.

The level of discourse in most of these sporting papers and magazines is remarkably high; quite on a par with our so-called "quality" press, while the level of expert knowledge tends, predictably, to be generally much higher.

When I read a match report in most of these publications — though the West German football pages much disappointed me during the 1988 European Championships with their perfunctory pieces — I feel I am being addressed by well educated, literate men.

They know their football inside out, give their articles a strong analytic slant, yet furnish the impression that they would be just as happy to be writing about politics or the arts.

It all has deeply to do with the wretched snobbery about sport in general and football in particular which we find still in British society.

I shan't bang on about this, as I said all I have to say — still depressingly relevant, alas — in an essay, Looking For an Idiom, published some 25 years ago in Encounter Magazine and in my collection, People In Sport.

There. I spoke of the dichotomy between the "posh" papers and the popular ones, of the lack of the kind of common idiom which allowed the best American sports writers, Ring Lardner, John Lardner, Damon Runyon, Paul Gallico, Red Smith and the rest, to address the sporting public at large, as opposed to a section, however big, of it.

In the Latin countries, there is no such problem. So it is no shame for a university educated man to go into football journalism.

Indeed in Italy, especially, sports writers, especially those on football, are accorded the kind of devoted following which we do not even give our television "personalities" (and why should we?).

Years ago, I remember France Football, when a famous player had missed a match won by his team, using the line "hang yourself, brave So & So! We fought at so and so, and you were not there!"

It was simply, tacitly and confidently assumed that everyone would pick up the reference; to Henry IV of Navarre, the 16th century king of France who, after a famous battle, jocularly abjured one of his chief supporters. "Hang yourself, brave Crillon! We fought at Arques, and you were not there!"

When I lived in Florence in the 1950's, I recall hearing the owner of a bar in the working class Borgo San Frediano saying, of the football then being played by the local club, Fiorentina, "it's not aesthetically pleasing".

There is, of course, a darker side to it all. British players who go to play in Italy and Spain often complain about the intense pressure exerted by the sporting press, of which there is so much, so often.

Trevor Francis lamented the publication of interviews he had never given; though not, as I recall, in any of the publications I have mentioned.

With so much space to fill, it is inevitable that players tend to be treated as the denizens of a goldfish bowl, though to give Corriere, Gazzetta and the rest their due, you don't find in them the atrocious prying into private lives, sexual escapades, which now disfigure our sordid tabloids.

What I have found in Italian sports journalism over the years is a disappointing parochialism, by comparison with great days of the past, when the traditional Terza Pagina, Third Page, would contain splendid articles from correspondents far and wide.

How heartening it was, on my first visit to Buenos Aires in 1968, to find myself at a reception meeting the likes of Oreste Bomben and Romolo Babusci, names I had been reading for years past!

These papers clearly know what they are doing as evidenced by their growing circulations, but the intense concentration on the Campionato to the expense of soccer elsewhere becomes a little incestuous.

As against that, Gazzetta dello Sport, a few years ago, were the first Italian sports daily actually to make their English correspondent, my friend Giancarlo Galavotti, a staff writer. In the past the job was held on a freelance basis.

Insularity is the last charge you could bring against L'Equipe and France Football, whose own correspondents roam the world far and wide, and who maintain their own correspondents, such as the excellent, lucid Alain Fontan in Rio, throughout the football world.

The French have long been famous for coming up with germinal ideas, such as those of the World Cup and the European Cup, the brainchild of Gabriel Hanot of L'Equipe.

But I still miss the best of all Italian football weeklies, never surpassed and never replaced, Il Calcio Illustrato, Leone Boccali's pride and joy.

A noisy, voluble little Milanese, Boccali initiated Calcio Illustrato in the 1930s. It would look a bit quaint now, up against its technicoloured successors such as Guerin Sportivo from Bologna.

Calcio Illustrato produced its pictures in sombre browns and greens, but its text was fascinatiing. In the image of Boccali himself, somewhat humourless but always greatly conscientious, Calcio was thorough, informative and comprehensive.

When Boccali died, it moved its offices to Rome and was edited in turn by two gifted, lively but somewhat dilettante Neapolitans, both friends of mine, but neither of them a Boccali.

One, Maurizio Barendson, is now, alas, dead. Antonio Ghirelli became editor of Tuttosport, Corriere dello Sport, and later still, personal adviser to the President of the Council of Italy, the Socialist Craxi.

Over the many years since its demise, nothing has succeeded Calcio Illustrato. Guerin Sportivo may be a far better production job, but by comparison, it's almost flashy, and fills out its pages with rock and pop.

Congratulations to El Grafico, which has just celebrated its 70th birthday. It has an almost intense personality of its own, the familiar Argentine compound of machismo and sentimentality, plus a pleasing involvement with the past, which it shares with the likes of Corriere dello Sport and Gazzetta.

Where cricket remembers its own and dwells in history, football in Britain has a pitifully short memory, and so seldom bothers to evoke or celebrate past heroes.

El Grafico does it almost to excess, though on a 70th aniversary, it may be forgiven.

I enjoy Don Balon, which never ceases to take strong positions; not least against Nunez, the ever contentious and contested president of Barcelona.

The interviews with players are usually lively and interesting, though I do get bored with questions put to players about their attitudes to sex . . . or religion.

Placar specialises in interviews, often interviewing the same star players, it seems, two or three times a season.

It is a general sports magazine — like El Grafico — with a heavy emphasis on football.

El Grafico recently distinguished itself with an admirable piece of investigative journalism, when it named and published photographs of the three thugs who had shot at the car of a former Racing Club player — the club they support — who had offended them by joining the rival Independiente.

El Grafico take up an uncompromisingly strong position over the violence which still so often disfigures the Argentine game.

In Italy, for many years, the problem has been too great a closeness between clubs and journalists, though this I think has begun to change for the better.

At least Gazzetta classified as "scandalous" UEFA's decision, a few years ago, to commute Roma's ban from the Cup Winners' Cup to a fine, after wily old President Viola had been found guilty of trying to bribe a referee. Even if the referee never got the money.

THE INTERNATIONAL SPORTS PRESS
Survey by Jonathan Shallard

★ The following is not meant to be an exhaustive list of the world's sporting press but a guide to some of the most authoritative publications in Europe and South America.

ALBANIA

Sporti Popullor
Ndermarrja e perhapjes se librit
Tirana
★ Four-page all-sports broadsheet newspaper published on Mondays and Fridays.

AUSTRIA

Kurier
1070 Lindengasse
52 Vienna 7
★ Kurier is a daily national newspaper with extensive domestic, and some international, sports coverage.

BELGIUM

Le Soir (Sport)
Place de Louvain 21
1000 Brussels
★ Le Soir is a daily newspaper with authoritative domestic sports coverage.

Foot Magazine
Rue Fin 4
1080 Brussels
★ Monthly football-only magazine incorporating major features on domestic and international personalities and topics.

BULGARIA

Naroden Sport
2 Ratikin St
Sofia
★ Daily, four-page broadsheet all-sports newspaper on which football takes most of one page (Page Three!) during the season. Carries a very basic international results service.

CZECHOSLOVAKIA

Ceskoslovensky Sport
Na Porici 30
Prague
★ Sports weekly specialising in football and ice hockey.

Sport (Bratislava)
Vajnorska ul.c.100
Bratislava
★ Daily sports newspaper with extensive coverage of domestic soccer and steady interest in foreign football as well.

Stadion
Olympic Publishing House
Klimentska 1
115 88 Prague 1
★ Sports weekly specialising in football and ice hockey.

EAST GERMANY

Neue Fussball-Woche
East Berlin 1086
Neustätische Kirchstrasse 15
★ The official East German football weekly with full statistical rundown on the domestic game.

FRANCE

L'Equipe
4, rue Rouget-de-Lisle
92137 Issy-les-Moulineaux
Paris
★ The world's most famous daily sports paper, founders of the European Champions' Cup and authoritative as ever on the game both at home and abroad.

France Football
4, rue Rouget-de-Lisle
92137 Issy-les-Moulineaux
Paris
★ Doyen of Europe's specialist soccer weeklies with wide-ranging domestic and international coverage. Foreign coverage is always better when the French national team are in a slump!

Onze
23, rue de Berri
75388 Paris Cedex 08
Tel: 49534953
★ High-colour monthly with attractive and well-balanced typography and a good 'nose' for the topics and personalities of the moment.

GREECE

Athlitiki Icho
11 Voulgari St
Athens
★ Daily sports paper, specialising naturally on the Athens and Piraeus clubs.

HOLLAND

Voetball International
Postbus 1259
1000 BG Amsterdam
★ Football weekly with a high reputation for responsible coverage at home and abroad.

HUNGARY

Nepsport
Somogyi Bela utca 6
Budapest VIII
★ Daily sports newspaper but disappointingly short when it comes to soccer statistics.

ITALY

Corriere dello Sport
Piazza Independenza 11B
00185 Rome
★ Daily sports paper which has improved by leaps and bounds in the last couple of years: high quality reporting and international coverage.

Guerin Sportivo
via dell'Industria 6
40068 San Lazzaro di Savena
★ High-colour weekly with matchless illustration of the domestic game and wide-ranging foreign feature and statistical coverage.

Gazzetta dello Sport
Piazza Cavour 2
Milan
★ Probably the world's liveliest sports daily paper with at least half the daily content given over to domestic and foreign football. Publishes seven days a week and the Monday edition, with all the weekend reports, sells well over one million copies.

Tuttosport
Torino
★ Italy's 'third' daily sports paper which keeps Corriere and Gazzetta on their toes.

NORWAY

Dagbladet (sport)
Akersgata 49
Box 116
Sentrum Oslo 1
★ General daily paper with an on-the-ball domestic sports service.

POLAND

Przeglad Sportowy
Mokotowska 24
Warsaw
★ Daily sports paper of generally only four or six pages.

Sport
ARS Polona
00-068 Warsaw
ul.Krakowskie Przedmiescie 7
Sports weekly.

PORTUGAL

A Bola
Trav.Queimada 23RC
Lisbon
Tel: 363981
★ Idiosyncratic sports paper — publised Monday, Thursday, Saturday — which reports at enormous length on the activities of Benfica, Sporting and Porto. Erratic statistical service.

RUMANIA

Sportul
79773 Bucharest
Str V Conta 16
★ Four-page daily sports paper with a reliable, if economic, international results service.

SOVIET UNION

Sovietsky Sport
Moscow
★ Four-page broadsheet sports daily whose best-known commentator is Victor Ponedelnik, former Soviet international centre-forward.

Football-Hockey
Moscow
★ Weekly sports paper.

SPAIN

Marca
Paseo de la Castellana 272
Madrid
★ Excellent daily sport paper with good international coverage and football always taking the lion's share of space.

Don Balon
Rocafort 241
Barcelona 29
★ High-colour football weekly which, despite being based in Barcelona, has never been afraid to take an independent, anti-Nunez line, on Catalan soccer.

El Mundo Deportivo
Dip.Talleres 62-64
Barcelona 1
★ Another excellent daily sport paper which, like Marca in Madrid, devotes most of its space to domestic and international soccer.

Dicen
Barcelona
★ Another Barcelona sports daily well worth sampling.

SWITZERLAND

Sport
Staffelstr. 8-12
Postfach
8021 Zurich
★ Broadsheet sports newspaper which is published three times a week, on Monday, Wednesday and Friday. Once the winter sports caravan has been put to rest Sport provides excellent domestic and international coverage. But its results service is still trying to recover from the upheaval caused around four years ago by the switch to so-called 'modern technology.'

WEST GERMANY

Kicker Sportmagazin
Olympia Verlag
Badstrasse 4-6
85 Nurnberg
★ This is THE West German sports magazine — published large and glossy on Monday and in more of a newspaper-format on Thursdays. Required reading for anyone with special interest in the West German game. International coverage depends heavily on where West German teams are going in foreign competition.

YUGOSLAVIA

Sport
Trg.Marsha i Engelsa 7
Belgrade
★ Daily sports paper in Cyrillic. Plenty of football coverage but very poor on statistics.

Sportske Novosti
Avenija bratstva i ledinsiva 4
Zagreb
★ Daily sports paper in orthodox characters but, like Sport, surprisingly poor when it comes to statistics.

Tempo
Belgrade
★ Sports weekly specialising heavily in features about current domestic soccer personalities.

SOUTH AMERICA

ARGENTINA

El Grafico
Editorial Atlantida
Azopardo 579
1307 Buenos Aires
★ Celebrating a 70th birthday this year. Grafico is an all-sports, high-colour weekly which has found a successful formula for merging news reports, long interviews and personality features, with the sort of historical material which almost turns it into a living domestic football history book.

Buenos Aires Herald
Azopardo 455
1107 Buenos Aires
★ English language daily newspaper with wide-ranging domestic and foreign coverage.

Clarin
Buenos Aires
★ Daily general newspaper with a tradition for extensive sports coverage.

BRAZIL

Placar
Editora Abril Ltda
Rua Geraldo Flausino Gomes 61, 80
Sao Paulo
★ High-colour weekly which picks a sane path through all the conflicting influences in Brazilian football both on and off the field.

CHILE

Deporte Total
Luis Thayer Ojeda 1626
(Providencia)
Casilla 3092
Santiago
★ High-colour sports weekly dominated by football.

VETERANS CUP GOES TO BRAZIL

from BRIAN HOMEWOOD in Sao Paulo

A BRAZILIAN win was the only realistic outcome of the second Veterans World Cup held in Sao Paulo.

Of the six nations taking part, there was no denying that the hosts were the most prepared and skilful team by a long way.

They duly won the competition with a 4-2 win over Uruguay in the final having qualified with four wins and one draw. But were they really entering into the spirit of the tournament?

The Copa Pele, as the competition is called, was basically intended to be for players over 34-years-old representing the six countries who have won the World Cup — Uruguay, Italy, Brazil, West Germany, England and Argentina.

But there were a couple of catches. First, there was a rule which allowed teams to field younger players.

Just as teams playing in the under-21 competition can field two over-age players, so it was decided that teams in the Copa Pele could field two under-age players born between 1955 and 1959.

Second, there was no rule to say whether players had to be retired or not.

No prizes will be awarded for guessing that the chief beneficiaries from this were the Brazilians. The hosts included in their squad eight players who have not retired, among them 34- year-old Claudio Adao, whose seven goals made him the tournament's top-scorer, and 31-year-old goalkeeper Paulo Vitor.

Both players are far from finished. Adao, for example, has just been signed by Corinthians of Sao Paulo, while Vitor has been through a rough period recently, with neither being able to hold a first team place at their respective clubs of Botafogo and Fluminense.

The Copa Pele gave them a chance to return to form. But is that what a competition like this is all about?

After all, if England had taken the rules to their extremes, they could have brought Bryan Robson.

In practice, though, things were weighted heavily against the Europeans who could not possibly have brought players who still play regularly, given that the competition was held at a time when most European championships are in progress.

The cup was organised by a sports promotions company called Luqun Propaganda e Promocoes, whose director Luciano do Valle doubled as the Brazilian team manager.

He did not see anything wrong at all with the rules: "I don't think it's got anything to do with whether the player is retired or still playing.

"The important thing is to have a rule about age — only this," he told World Soccer.

The Europeans on the whole thought it would be better if the competition was restricted to players who had retired . . . but they seemed to accept that Brazil needed to get to the final to make it reasonably successful.

The first Copa Pele took place in 1987, also organised by do Valle, with the same countries minus England. Do Valle intends to organise another three cups at two-year intervals before calling it a day.

A reported £1.2 million had been invested this time around although do Valle insisted he was not making any profit, only "investing for the future".

The cup was organised on a league basis with all six teams in one group, except that at the end a final would be played between the top two, with the team that had finished first needing only to draw to take the title.

There was a vast difference in the amount of preparation the teams had done. Brazil had gone to the greatest lengths, having played eight warm-up games beforehand.

In fact, the Brazilians have a permanent veterans team playing matches all year round under the guidance of do Valle.

The star of their team was undoubtedly Roberto Rivelino, now 43, and probably playing in his last veterans competition.

Uruguay had also been training together for a month, though they obviously lacked Brazil's technical ability, while defending champions Argentina had managed to get their players together three weeks in advance.

Ricardo Villa, the ex-Tottenham player who still plays in the Argentine second division, turned out to be their best player.

Infamous

The European sides had done considerably less work but it was they who brought most of the big names. Italy, for instance, had Paolo Rossi and Francesco Graziani in their line-up, plus two players who are rather more infamous in Claudio Gentile and Romeo Benetti.

The Germans brought with them the Kaiser himself, Franz Beckenbauer, Paul Breitner, Rainer Bonhof, Wolfgang Overath and Uwe Seeler, now 52, the man who scored Germany's equaliser in the 1970 World-Cup quarter-final against England.

England, or Great Britain as it turned out, arrived the worst prepared and prepared for the worst.

Making their debut in the competition, the players — including Joe Corrigan, Dennis Mortimer, Alan Kennedy, Martin Buchan, Kenny Burns, Duncan Mackenzie, Don Masson, Terry McDermott, John Robertson, Gordon Hill, Alan Whittle, Frank Worthington, David Johnson and managed by Norman Hunter — arrived expecting that all they would have to do was sit by the swimming-pool, sample the local beverages and have the odd kick-about in-between.

Their first collective training session was two days before the opening match with Brazil.

The squad was organised not by the FA but by Gordon Banks' sports promotions company.

Sandra Roberts, a director of the company, said they had only had confirmation "a very short time" in advance that the trip was on and they had needed to include Scottish players to make up sufficient numbers.

It appears that the FA, meanwhile, kept up its tradition of turning its back on any new international tournament. Do Valle said that he sent an invitation to Lancaster Gate but received no reply.

"We won't let anyone down but it'll be a miracle if we win anything," said Terry McDermott.

Prepared

"We were well enough prepared for what we thought it was going to be," said Mackenzie "but we had no idea it was anything like this."

The first round of matches saw defending champions Argentina lose surprisingly to Uruguay, and Brazil predictably beat Great Britain 3-0.

The British kept it down to one goal until the last 20 minutes and Corrigan, despite a few extra pounds, showed he had lost very little of his agility.

However, towards the end, the difference in preparation showed and, as Britain tired, the Brazilians scored two more goals and did an awful lot of showing off.

West Germany and Italy, meanwhile, showed how this sort of competition should be played with open, attacking football.

There could have been five goals in the first ten minutes, though again things slowed down considerably in the second-half. The game ended 1-1 and Paolo Rossi missed a penalty.

In the next round, things started to get far too serious.

This included the meeting of Brazil and Italy, which the Brazilian press saw as a revenge match for Italy's 3-2 World Cup win in Barcelona nearly seven years ago.

Blood

In particular, the press wanted Rossi's blood for the hat- trick he scored that day. Thanks to headlines such as "The executioner Rossi has arrived" and "Brazil wants the head of the executioner", the match was played in an atmosphere more appropriate for a public hanging than a veterans' football tournament.

Rossi was booed every time he touched the ball (as he had been against Germany) and went off at half-time; both linesmen were hit by objects thrown from the crowd; the players behaved appallingly, kicking each other and pretending to be injured when they were not; and the press still did not get their revenge — the game ended 1-1 with Graziani scoring for Italy.

The press also tried to stir up trouble when Argentina played Britain with the inevitable "A Falklands war in the Caninde" headline appearing in the Diario Popular, but the teams concentrated on football.

Gordon Hill gave Britain the lead after two minutes, after which the British showed themselves to be surprisingly adept at playing the ball on the ground.

But they missed several chances and gave away a silly penalty before half-time, tired again in the second half and eventually lost 4-2.

On the same day, Uruguay beat West Germany 1-0 to go top of the table.

There was more trouble to come when Italy met Uruguay. Despite the 3-3 scoreline, the match was little more than a bad-tempered brawl and Carmine Gentile and Causio of Italy and Yanes of Uruguay were all sent off.

Meanwhile Britain won their first game, beating West Germany, for whom Beckenbauer was making his debut in the tournament, 2-1.

Worthington provided a perfect cross for Mackenzie to head the first goal and then scored the second himself from close range.

The game between Brazil and Argentina was played on a waterlogged pitch and would have been called off in most competitions. The Brazilians only did not create hell about this because they won 3-0.

The next round of games saw Argentina beat the Italians with a penalty by Brailowsky after a foul by Benetti.

The result was totally against the run of play with Italy dominating the game but failing to take their chances.

Once again Britain dominated the first-half of their game against Uruguay and should have had more to show than the 27th minute goal scored by David Johnson.

Britain abandoned the high ball tactics to the eternal bewilderment of the Brazilian TV commentators, who were particularly impressed by Corrigan, Worthington and Hill.

Once again, Britain tired in the second-half, enabling the opposition to bounce back and win 2-1.

The next day Brazil beat the Germans 2-0. In the final itself, Brazil repeated the dose, winning by 4-2 (see results).

What was obvious during the games was that none of the players had lost their touch — Rivelino's left foot was still lethal, Beckenbauer was as elegant as ever, Rossi was always lurking dangerously and Benetti was not taking any prisoners.

What had gone was fitness and it was significant that the best-prepared teams got to the final.

"Football you don't forget — what is lacking is the physical condition," said Rivelino, who himself had to miss part of the competition because of knee problems.

Most teams decided that the world did not depend on their winning the tournament and adopted a reasonably open style of play, except the Uruguayans who preferred to stick 11 men behind the ball.

As for the players' discipline — reasonable, but could do a lot better.

"It's a good idea but sometimes it's a little bit too serious," said Beckenbauer.

Field

"It should be all the former players, stars of whatever. They come here, they behave like a family . . . it's very good, there's a really good friendship. "But on the field . . . .sometimes I don't understand. It's not a serious competition, so take it easy.

"England and Germany have a really high average age, while Brazil are all around 35 and we are around 45. For me, I haven't played football for years, so I came.

"I had my first practice and, of course, I've got the muscle problem because the body's not prepared for it. So on the field I have a lot of problems."

The British surpassed their own expectations and said that next time they would come fully prepared.

"Next time we'll do the business," said Gordon Hill.

In fact, according to Duncan Mackenzie, there are plans to start preparing 12 months beforehand if the team is invited to the next competition.

One thing is for sure they will only be allowed to have English players.

Perhaps the biggest disappointment was the number of big names who did not come. Where

● Continued overleaf

Franz Beckenbauer holds off Alan Kennedy

Results

15 JANUARY 1989
Caninde
Uruguay 2 (Cardaccio 29, Bica 68)
Argentina 1 (Perotti 77)

Brazil 3 (Nunes 23, Lola 71, Wladimir 77)
Gt Britain 0

16 JANUARY 1989
Caninde
Italy 1 (Morini 88)
West Germany 1 (Sidka 34)

18 JANUARY 1989
Caninde
Argentina 4 (Brailowsky 22 (pen) and 62, Perotti 53, Villa 57)
Great Britain 2 (Hill 2, Worthington 67 (pen))

19 JANUARY 1989
Caninde
Uruguay 1 (Ramirez 54)
West Germany 0

22 JANUARY 1989
Caninde
West Germany 1 (Toppmuller 52 (pen))
Great Britain 2 (Mackenzie 43, Worthington 69)

Brazil 3 (Zenon 4, Batista 12, Claudio Adao 46)
Argentina 0

24 JANUARY 1989
Estadio do USP
Italy 3 (Paolo Rossi 22, Benetti 54, Selvaggi 80)
Uruguay 3 (Yanes 37, Ghione 73, Cabrera 83)

25 JANUARY 1989
Vila Belmiro
Brazil 2 (Claudio Adao 70 Nunes 90)
West Germany 0

26 JANUARY 1989
Vila Bermiro
Argentina 1 (Brailowsky 18 pen)
Italy 0

Great Britain 1 (Johnson 28)
Uruguay 2 (Gonzalez 64, Cabrera 66)

29 JANUARY 1989
Vila Belmiro
West Germany 5 (Sidka 16,30,61, Lohr 88, Toppmuller 90)
Argentina 1 (Coch 86)

Great Britain 0 Italy 0

30 JANUARY 1989
Vila Belmiro
Brazil 2 (Claudio Adoa 47,68)
Uruguay 0

THE FINAL
2 FEBRUARY 1989 Caninde Brazil 4 (Claudio Adao 2,45,47 (pen), Rivelino 73)
Uruguay 2 (Siviero 70, Cabrera 88 (pen)

SQUADS

GK — goalkeeper
FB — full-back
DF — defender/sweeper
MF — midfield
FW — forward

ARGENTINA

GK Buttice, FB Squeo, DF Cortez, DF Mouza, FB Cardenas, DF Killer, DF Botaniz, MF Berta, MF Brindisi, MF Lopez, MF Villa, GK Rodriguez, MF Betinez, FW Coch, FW Felman, FW Outes, FW Brailowsky, FW Perotti, FW Mas, DF Albrecht, MF Vidalle, FW Alonso, FW Bertoni. Manager: Carmelo Faraone.

WEST GERMANY

GK Klef, FB Kremers, MF Briefel, MF Bonhof, DF Beckenbauer, DF Cullman, FW Toppmuller, MF Breitner, FW Seeler, MF Overath, FW Holzenbein, FB Wosab, MF Geye, FB Glowacz, MF Eillenfeldt, FB Muller, FW Herzog, FB Forster, MF Sidka, FW Gersdorff, GK Stars. Manager: Hannes Lohr.

ITALY

GKK Albertosi, FB Belluggi, MF Carmine Gentile, FB Claudio Gentile, DF Rocco, MF Roggi, MF Bedin, MF Benetti, FW Rossi, FW D'Amico MF de Nadai, GK Copparoni, FW Morini, FW Altafini, FW Damiani, FW Graziani, DF Casone, FW Selvaggi, DF Restelli, FW Causio, MF Oriali, DF Zacarelli, FB Mastropasqua, FB Fiaschi. Manager: Ferrucio Valcareggi.

GREAT BRITAIN

GK Corrigan, DF Buchan, FB Kennedy, MF McDermott, DF Burns, DF Hunter, MF Mortimer, MF Masson, FW Worthington, FW Whittle, FW Hill, FW Johnson, GK Bonetti, FW Osgood, FW Robertson, MR Bates, FB Shellito, MF Mackenzie. Manager: Norman Hunter.

URUGUAY

GK Bertinat, FB Montelongo, DF Duarte, FB Forlan, DF Morale, DF Miguel Gonzalez, DF Cabrera, FW Cardaccio, FW Ramirez, FW Yanes, FW Alonso, GK Clavijo, FB Gerolami, FW Lattuada, FW Jorge, FW Ghione, FW Tolosa, FB Amaro, FW Hector Silva, DF Juan Carlos, FB Hector Roux, MF Resola. Manager: Juan Mujica.

BRAZIL

GK Ado, FB Eurico, DF Luis Pereira, DF Amaral, MF Rocha, FB Wladimir, FW Cafuringa, MF Batista, FW Claudio Adao, MF Rivelino, FW Edu, GK Paulo Vitor, FW Lola, DF Jayme, MF Mario Sergio, FW Chico Espino, MF Marco Aurelio, MF Eduardo, FW Nunes, MF Rotta, MF Zenon, FW Carpinelli, GK Miguel. Manager: Luciano do Valle.

'Football has to modernise'

● Continued from previous page

were Bobby Moore, Kevin Keegan, Jairzinho, Dino Zoff and Gerd Muller, for example?

"You can't just take three weeks off. These people are busy people," said Mackenzie, who himself did not know whether he would be able to take part next time.

Mackenzie would like to see a competition of this sort held in Europe, as he feels that it would not depend so much on the host team getting to the final for success.

This time around up to 30,000 people turned up when Brazil were in action but only a couple of thousand bothered to come along when they were not.

"Perhaps if they did this in Europe, the supporters would be interested in all the teams and not just their own," he suggested.

The man after whom the whole thing had been named did not play though there had been rumours he would but he had to pull out because of "other commitments."

Pele's only appearances were at a pre-tournament press conference and subsequently on television advertising sausages during the half-time commercial breaks.

Finally, the competition gave the Europeans a chance to see how the Brazilians go about organising things and what Brazilian players have to put up with.

Generally they were impressed with the set-up, with all teams accommodated in the same five-star hotel rather strangely located between Sao Paulo's most polluted river, an eight-lane highway and an industrial estate. But there were some teething troubles.

The organisers had arranged to have all 16 games in the same stadium — the Caninde in Sao Paulo. But after eight matches had been played, the inevitable happened and the pitch had cut up so much as to be unplayable.

That left the organisers stadiumless. Eventually they found another stadium — in Santos, an hour and a half's drive away.

Then there was a mix-up over the Argentina-Italy and Great Britain-Uruguay matches, played on the same night. The Argentineans had the impression they were on second, when in fact they were on first.

What hadn't helped was that the playing order had been altered wrongly and then announced by the television company for which do Valle is sports editor.

The Europeans were also able to see at first hand the extremely popular Brazilian custom of making up the rules as you go along.

When the competition started, it was decreed that any player who received two yellow cards or was sent off would miss his team's next game. Except that after the Italy-Uruguay affair, the organising committee got together, decided on an amnesty for the players sent off and raised the yellow card limit to three.

As Beckenbauer said, jokingly; "That's Brazil."

LUCIANO do VALLE, the man behind the Copa Pele, was probably born in the wrong country.

His ideas about football would go down far better in the United States than in Brazil which, when it comes to football, is a very conservative country.

One of his innovations was tried out during the competition in Sao Paulo — that of passing messages to his team during the game instead of waiting to until the interval.

To do this he placed a pair of large earphones behind the goal of Brazilian 'keeper Paulo Vitor. The idea was that whenever there was a stoppage Vitor would put on the earphones, listen to what his boss had to say and then pass the instructions to his colleagues.

The referees were not too keen but who's tournament was it?

"When the game is stopped, I don't see any problem in speaking to the goalkeeper for ten seconds. Ten seconds — what's the problem?" he said.

But that's not all. Do Valle has more plans which he has not put into practice . . . .yet.

Football fans who like the game the way it is and find Vitor's earphones a monstrosity are advised not to read any further. This is what he has in store.

★ TIME OUT — do Valle thinks the game should be stopped for one minute at 20 to 25 minute intervals to allow managers to talk to the players and television stations to show commercials.

★ THREE REFEREES: Instead of one referee and two linesmen, he wants to see three referees, operating on a system similar to hockey (where there are two umpires).

★ VIDEO SCREEN: In case of any doubt, do Valle would like to make replays on a video screen valid in making a decision. "If there's doubt, let's see the tape."

The reasoning behind all this is simple. "Football has to modernise, it's very old. It's the only sport in which just one head changes the result."

He admits that it will be difficult to get FIFA to accept all this but adds: "One day they will have to accept."

Do Valle aims to take his ideas to the new CBF chairman Ricardo Teixeira and he intends to organise a tournament with all his innovations.

"I intend to do this. I think that it's important. When will it be? We'll see. When the chance comes along."

You may find all this to be little more than fantasy. But even if you don't like his ideas, do Valle at least deserves to be taken seriously.

Apart from successfully organising two Copa Peles, running his sports promotions company and being manager of the winning team, he is sports editor of TV Bandeirantes and has just signed a contract with Miguel Assad, the president of Santos FC — for which he also has plans.

The agreement is intended to enable Santos to exploit the good name that its history has given it outside Brazil.

A team will be formed called the Santos Masters, consisting mainly of players contracted do Valle's Brazil veterans side plus possibly some current Santos first team players, to play friendlies abroad. The club receives several invitations a month at present.

In addition, Luqui Propoganda e Promocoes will have responsibility for the entire football structure in the club from the infants upwards.

And there are plans to modernise the Vila Belmiro stadium, create parking facilities, cushioned seats and a bigger capacity.

"We want it so that someone can be on the beach at 3 o'clock and know that he will have a place guaranteed if he arrives a little before four," he explained.

These plans may not sound too impressive in Europe but in Brazil they are almost revolutionary.

Forty-one and married with three children, do Valle claims to have been a journalist for 25 years.

He worked for 11 years with TV Globo and the last seven with Bandeirantes. Although he did not play football at professional level, he says he believes he makes a good coach.

The idea behind the Copa Pele was "to prove the value of the players who are 34 or more years old".

He adds: "In Brazil we have the idea that a player over 34 is finished, but he isn't. So we decided to organise a competition bringing together the ex-champions of the world."

The idea seems to be catching on. At the end of the competition representatives from the six teams taking part, plus France, got together to form the International Association of Senior Football, and there are plans to hold the 1991 competition in the United States.

HAVING qualified for the final in first place, Brazil needed only a draw to take the title.

Thankfully the host nation decided to go for the victory anyway and in the sixth minute Eurico crossed from the right, Claudio Adao headed against the bar, grabbed the rebound and opened the scoring.

From then on the Brazilian dominance was total and on the stroke of half time Adao curled an exquisite free-kick around the Uruguayan wall to make it 2-0. The furious Uruguayans surrounded German referee Dieter Pauli as he left the field at half time, apparently because they felt the wall had been pushed too far back.

The second-half had hardly begun when Mario Sergio was suspended in the Uruguayan area and Adao completed his hat-trick with a Socrates-style penalty. This time the Uruguayans remained unusually calm.

Siviero took advantage of some slack Brazilian marking to reduce the deficit but Brazil restored their advantage shortly afterwards when Rivelino scored what will probably be his last goal and ironically with his right foot.

Uruguay, who apart from the half-time blemish had been reasonably well-behaved — at least by Uruguayan standards — pulled another goal back through their top-scorer Cabrera just before the end. As Mr Pauli blew the final whistle, the heavens opened, do Valle ran to embrace everyone and his dog and smiled for possibly the first time since the competition started.

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JEERS FOR RINAT

WHEN Soviet goalkeeper RINAT DASAYEV arrived in Spain before Christmas to join Sevilla, he was overwhelmed by the welcoming crowd which turned up at the airport. But it took only a few weeks for the cheers to turn to jeers . . . and for coach Javier Azcargorta to rest him because of an unspecified muscle strain. Here Dasayev talks about his traumatic start in Spain and reviews his career and goalkeeping philosophy. Interview by GREGOR TASSIE.

WHAT problems have you met in Spanish football?

Basically, I am very tired. When I signed, I warned the directors that I had been playing football virtually non-stop since the start of last year and that I ought to rest for a couple of weeks.

But they asked me to start playing for them as soon as I could. I am sure that has been a factor in things.

But I am not really looking for excuses.

THE own goal you scored against Logrones — which presented them with a 1-0 win — must still give you nightmares. What happened?

I still cannot understand it. I thought I had the ball perfectly under control in my hands but as I went to clear it, the ball slipped out of my grasp for no apparent reason.

I realised immediately that I had knocked it back into my own goal and I just froze. I felt the sky had fallen in on me.

I was so upset for the team and the fans. I couldn't sleep that night and I've never felt so upset about a goal. It was mental torture.

SURELY that was right out of character for a player of your experience?

This all goes back to my original point. After playing a full year's league football with Moscow Spartak, plus the high pressure involved with the European Championship finals, I was psychologically weary.

I can't look to anyone else. We have a good all-round squad of players in Seville and they have all done their best to help me, above all, Fernando, whose place in goal I took.

He's a marvellous man, a real gentleman, who has given me so much help and encouragement.

YOUR experience will help you now, won't it?

I became the No.1 goalkeeper for Spartak back in 1978 and in the following year for the national team. I've been first choice virtually ever since.

But that does not make you immune to mistakes. Then regaining form becomes a psychological problem. A goalkeeper who is out of sorts finds he can't feel the ball properly, that it hurts when he has to dive for a save and that's when he's liable to make even more awful errors.

HOW do you regain your best form?

There are no special remedies. Everyone has his own way out of a personal crisis.

It's easier for an experienced keeper — though not always — to get out of a rut than a younger, inexperienced keeper. As for myself, at training sessions, I will play with the outfield players rather than stand in goal. Or sometimes, I'll go jogging in the woods on my own.

WHAT do you think about the alternative of having two first-class keepers instead of one?

This idea has been debated in football for a long time. At first, it looks simple. For the manager, two class keepers are a great help, particularly if one is injured when there is someone to call upon.

But there is no guarantee of solving the team's problems. Every goalkeeper needs practice all the time or one easily loses form.

Playing in the reserves isn't the same. So for the manager, it's a big problem. Which keeper to pick without upsetting the other player and not affecting the team's morale.

BUT haven't Kiev Dynamo resolved this problem now?

I've known Viktor Chanov and Alexander Zhidkov for many years. They're both fine and experienced men, each having the ability needed to play for Kiev in the most difficult games.

Yet only one of them can be selected and when the other has to sit on the reserves bench, he can quickly lose his confidence and form.

By the way, this actually happened in last season's game between Spartak and Kiev. In many ways, Kiev's failure in this game was largely due to Zhidkov's unreliability and bad mistakes in goal.

When he played previously for Nefchi Baku, he never made such errors. Every goalkeeper, if fit, always needs to play.

DURING the 1970s, both Peter Shilton and Ray Clemence switched roles for England without any real disappointments.

Maybe it worked out for them but there must have been problems. The manager has to look at a whole number of reasons as to why one keeper is picked and not the other.

There is also the problem of not offending the second keeper so his own form is not affected.

At Moscow Dynamo just now, there is a good reserve goalkeeper but he's 28 already and how many times has he played for the first team? Not many.

WHAT is the answer?

There's no easy way out. I would suggest the best variation is that just one keeper should have the No.1 position and that his reserve should prepare himself to eventually replace him.

However, this is taking into account the fact that the reserve is young and has the potential.

WHAT about competition? When there is none, then mistakes can occur through over-confidence.

In my view, this is nonsense. I always feel the strain, the pressure of my position both for the club and for the national team.

But I always try to prove by my play, particularly in training, that I am the No.1 goalkeeper.

WHAT does football mean to you?

Football is my passion. Yet it's also my job. All my joys and agonies, all my bitterness and happiness is wrapped up in the game. That's what I understand about football.

HAS luck affected your sporting career?

There's always been a trace of luck. But it was luck which I believe I earned.

I've always been surrounded by fine people in sport. They taught me my skills step by step.

My first coach was Gerald Blednikh, later, at Astrakhan Volagar, the coach was Feodor Novikov and, of course, at Spartak there was Konstatin Beskov.

Were they strict? Yes, but they were always friendly. Together with their rigid principles, there was always warmth and kindness.

I have always tried to prove by my play that they were not mistaken in helping me.

WHAT would have happened to you if you hadn't been suddenly switched from playing as a forward to goalkeeper at Volagar when the regular keeper was hurt?

Honestly, I don't know. In sport, accidents play their role and I'm probably grateful to fate that everything happened the way it did.

Really, there are many fine players in the lower leagues in the Soviet Union.

It's a pity that many of them never make the grade.

HOW do you relate to so-called 'unstoppable' shots?

It's difficult to explain this to others but, theoretically, every shot is stoppable, even the most uncanny ones. Everything is to do with training and yet more training.

A good club atmosphere helps psychologically as well.

In conclusion, I can say that, in all my years at Moscow Spartak, the friendly relationship throughout the whole club helped me enormously and I'm eternally grateful to everyone for everything I have achieved here.

Now I am confident everything will turn out for the best in Seville.

NEWS FROM SOUTH AMERICA...

COBRELOA CHAMPIONS IN CHILE

CHILEAN FIRST DIVISION CHAMPIONS (since 1931) 15 — Colo Colo; 7 — Universidad de Chile; 6 — Universidad Catolica; 5 — Union Espanola; 4 — Magallanes, Audax Italiano, Cobreloa; 3 — Everton; 2 — Palestino.

CHILE: Cobreloa, from the northern mining town of Calama, have won the Chilean First Division title for the fourth time while their FA continues to be split.

But Universidad de Chile, one of the country's most popular clubs, have been relegated for the first time in their history after finishing next to bottom in the table on goal difference.

Withdrew

As mentioned in last month's World Soccer, five clubs withdrew from the First Division championship — Colo Colo, Universidad de Chile, Union Espanola, Palestino and Universidad Catolica — over disagreements with Chilean FA president, Miguel Nasur.

And they threatened to form their own league, also inviting other clubs to join.

To avoid the split, club presidents decided to vote for a new interim president and elected Sergio Stoppel of Cobreloa. But Nasur refused to resign.

Both FIFA and the South American Football Confederation continued to recognise Nasur and at press time former FIFA executive committee member, Eduardo Rocca Couture of Uruguay, had been sent to Chile as mediator.

URUGUAY: The young Danubio team, which won both last season's championships in Uruguay, only just made it into this year's Libertadores Cup on penalties.

In Uruguay, the First Division champions do not automatically qualify for the Libertadores Cup.

This is done through an end-of-season play-off between the six best teams of the season, known as the "Liguilla", which was won by Penarol who put up their best performances of the season.

Danubio, with the players feeling tired after a difficult season in which only five of 41 games were lost, could only finish third.

As champions, however, they had the right to play off with the second-placed team, the previous year's First Division champions Defensor, for a second cup place.

Danubio won the play-off but only 4-3 on penalties after 90 minutes of play had finished at 1-1.

Their goalkeeper, Javier Zeoli, stopped two of the penalties and, fittingly, Ruben "Polilla" Da Silva, their leading scorer, netted the winning penalty.

COLOMBIA: The Colombian professional championship was due to begin in February but the government put a block on the big kick- off until all 15 clubs cleared up their financial problems.

The only club not in the red is Deportivo Cali, who recently sold star midfielder Carlos Valderrama to French club Montpellier.

The Colombian Government would like clubs to justify the enormous sums they spend on foreign players, especially imports from Argentina.

It has long been suspected that a lot of drug profits are being chanelled through soccer clubs and the government is checking on irregularities in club accounts.

Champions Millonarios and Nacional have already been fined for such misdemeanours.

Investigations have also exposed various other irregularities, such as five clubs with their authorisation to function expired.

Another club has never registered its colours in 33 years and a further club has only one member registered as owner when the established minimum is 1,000.

ZICO . . . heading for the States?

PERU: Sporting Cristal won the de-centralised championship, the second of the season's tournaments in Peru, to qualify for a clash for the title with Universitario, who had won the first tournament.

Complicated rules put Universitario into this year's Libertadores Cup automatically as winners of the first title, but Sporting had to play off for the second place in a six-team round-robin between leading de-centralized championship teams and Alianza Lima, who had won the latter tournament's B division.

Sporting Cristal won this play-off but only thanks to two bonus points gained by taking top place in the de-centralized championship.

Hectic

The hectic Lima derby between Universitario and Alianza ended in a 2-2 draw and Ramon Quiroga, now on the Universitario coaching staff, hitting the referee and sending him to hospital.

Quiroga was Peru's goalkeeper in the 1978 World Cup finals when he was largely blamed for his team's 6-0 defeat against Argentina, which put the latter into the final.

He is Argentine-born but took out Peruvian nationality to be able to play for the country.

BRAZIL: While the Brazilian national championship was still in its mid-summer recess, the FA announced a new championship for this season — the Brazil Cup.

On a knock-out basis over two legs, the Brazil Cup will be played from July 19 to September 2 between 22 state champions and 10 vice-champions — while the traditional national championship is scheduled from September 7 to December 17.

The latter will have a First Division of 22 teams and a special division, the lower one, of 64.

Both tournaments will be important as the winners of each will qualify for the following year's Libertadores Cup.

Until now, it has been the top two teams in the national championship.

Flamengo, the popular Rio club, are studying the possibility of joining up with the Miami Sharks, which would enable such leading Brazilian stars as Zico, Leandro and Edu to play in the United States for part of the year.

The joint venture would also take Edu, Zico's brother, to coach the Sharks.

BOLIVIA: The Strongest won the second stage of the Bolivian professional championship to qualify for the Libertadores Cup, together with Bolivar who had won the first round.

This is the first time that the two popular La Paz teams will represent Bolivia in the tournament together.

PARAGUAY: While Paraguayan champions Olimpia qualified for this year's Libertadores Cup automatically, vice-champions Sol de America had to play for second place with provincial champions Silvio Pettirossi.

Sol de America won easily, winning the home leg 5-0 and drawing 1-1 away.

Meanwhile, Guarani have signed Uruguayan coach Julio Coesana to increase the number of foreign coaches amongst the big clubs.

Olimpia have renewed Luis Cubilla's contract, Cerro Porteno have brought in Brazilian Otacilio Goncalves, and Sol de America already have another Uruguayan in Sergio Markarian.

Paraguayan coaches complain: "They pay us little and don't back us when we want to strengthen the team, contrary to what happens when a foreign coach is in charge."

SOUTH AMERICAN INTERNATIONAL RECORDS — 1988

	HOME						AWAY						TOTAL					
	P	W	D	L	F	A	W	D	L	F	A	W	D	L	F	A	%
Colombia	6	2	0	0	4	1	2	2	0	6	2	4	2	0	10	3	83
Brazil	7	0	0	0	0	0	4	3	0	11	3	4	3	0	11	3	80
Paraguay	4	2	0	0	5	1	1	0	1	5	3	3	0	1	10	4	75
Uruguay	7	4	0	0	10	2	0	1	2	3	6	4	1	2	13	8	64
Chile	10	1	1	0	4	2	2	3	3	9	9	3	4	3	13	11	50
Ecuador	6	0	0	1	1	5	2	1	2	6	6	2	1	3	7	11	42
Argentina	7	0	0	0	0	0	1	3	3	8	12	1	3	3	8	12	36
Peru	2	0	1	0	1	1	0	0	1	0	3	0	1	1	1	4	25

RESULTS

March — Soviet Union 4 Argentina 1; Colombia 2 USA 0.

April — West Germany 1 Argentina 0.

May — USA 0 Colombia 2; Scotland 0 Colombia 0; Finland 1 Colombia 3; England 1 Colombia 1; Greece 1 Chile 0 (1).

June — Honduras 1 Ecuador 1; USA 1 Chile 1; USA 1 Chile 3; USA 0 Chile 3; USA 0 Ecuador 1; USA 0 Ecuador 2.

July — Saudi Arabia 2 Argentina 2 (2); Australia 0 Brazil 1; Brazil 0 Argentina 0 (2); Saudi Arabia 1 Brazil 4 (2); Australia 4 Argentina 1; Saudi Arabia 0 Argentina 2 (2); Australia 0 Brazil 2; Norway 1 Brazil 1; Sweden 1 Brazil 1.

August — Austria 0 Brazil 2; Colombia 2 Uruguay 1.

September — Ecuador 1 Paraguay 5; Chile 3 Ecuador 1; Uruguay 2 Ecuador 1; Paraguay 2 Chile 0; Paraguay 3 Uruguay 1 (3); Ecuador 0 Chile 0 (3).

October — Uruguay 2 Paraguay 0; Spain 1 Argentina 1.

November — Chile 1 Uruguay 1; Uruguay 3 Chile 1; Peru 1 Chile 1.

December — Uruguay 3 Peru 0.

Home teams mentioned first except (1) in USA, (2) in Australia and (3) in Paraguay.

Leading scorers

Iguaran (Colombia) 5, Da Silva (Uruguay) 3, Rubio (Chile) 3.

ARGENTINA: Argentine national team captain Diego Maradona got into the news without really doing anything . . . or rather his back pains did.

A controversy started between three Argentine doctors — Ruben Oliva, who lives in Italy, Argentine national team doctor Raul Madero and another Buenos Aires doctor, Eduardo Ciarrochi — when Maradona went missing from a game for his Italian club, Napoli.

Diego's back pains have been diagnosed as disc hernia but all three doctors prescribed a different kind of treatment.

Ciarrochi, who at one time worked for the Argentine FA, had the most significant opinion, although he has not advised the player as yet.

Ciarrochi says that if Maradona has disc hernia and is operated on, his participation in the next World Cup finals would be doubtful and his career might even be shortened.

TRANSFER NEWS: Daniel Vidal, the Uruguayan international winger, has moved from Penarol (Uruguay) to Las Palmas (Spain) for 480,000 dollars . . . Franco Navarro, the Peruvian international striker, has switched from Universidad Autonoma de Guadalajara (Mexico) to Wittinger (Switzerland) for 400,000 dollars.

...BY ERIC WEIL

BILARDO ADMITS POOR FORM

LAST year was a poor one for World Cup holders Argentina. Even their coach, Carlos Bilardo, admitted that much . . . and he is a man who usually says he is satisfied after all Argentina's matches.

Bilardo complained that he could not work properly with six newcomers he was bringing into the team. Two were eventually sold abroad — a constant drain on Argentina's resources — and others were withdrawn by their clubs for Libertadores Cup engagements.

It is a well known fact that Argentina won the 1986 World Cup with a team based on players with foreign clubs and these were seldom available for their six international matches last year.

Argentina were thus beaten 4-1 by Australia in a friendly tournament there, which must surely rank as the upset of the year, and they were held 2-2 by Saudi Arabia.

Their only victory of the year came by 2-0 over Saudi in the same tournament. It must be said, however, that Argentina played all their matches away.

During 1988, eight South American countries played 37 full internationals, none of them in official tournaments — Bolivia and Venezuela did not play — and five countries went on tours.

Only one foreign country played one match on the South American continent, the United States losing 2-0 to Colombia.

Brazil, also playing all their (seven) games away and without some eight internationals with European clubs, nevertheless did a lot better than Argentina against almost similar opposition.

Their team, touring before going on to the Olympic Games in Seoul, was billed as the Olympic squad, but they were playing full internationals. It is now difficult to draw the line.

Other matches involving South American teams during 1988 were not included in this review because they were training matches with Olympic squads.

Colombia made one of their rare tours and British fans were able to appreciate their good soccer in matches against England and Scotland for the 'Rous' Cup.

Perhaps their leading position in the unofficial table published herewith is deserved, but comparing the teams it is a close thing with Brazil and Uruguay.

Other even rarer tourists last year were Ecuador, but they got no further than the United States and did not leave the American continent.

The current year will bring intense international activity in South America with the South American Championship for the 'Copa America' being played in Brazil as well as qualifying matches for the 1990 World Cup later.

There will also be the usual profusion of warm-up matches and the South American Championship will be used by all countries as World Cup trials.

The South American Championship, from July 1-16, will be played in two five-team groups this time with the top two of each qualifying for semi-finals.

Brazil, Colombia, Paraguay, Peru and Venezuela meet in Group A while Argentina, Chile, Uruguay, Bolivia and Ecuador are in Group B.

As things were last year, Argentina are perhaps lucky that as cup holders they will not have to play in this year's World Cup qualifying games.

Bilardo has an extensive programme mapped out which, at press time, had not got off the ground — the season was also in recess — but their first international was scheduled for March 9 against Colombia.

The latter, on the other hand, began preparations with a 20- man squad (including nine players from Nacional who traditionally field only home-born players) in mid-January.

With the recent transfer of winger Daniel Vidal to Spain's Las Palmas, Uruguayan national team coach Oscar Tabares will want eight players with foreign clubs for his World Cup qualifying team.

Paraguay have also started preparations and intend playing some 25 to 30 games before the qualifying round.

Bolivian FA president, German Jordan says that complete priority will be given to the national team this year which will be concentrated from Mondays to Fridays with players allowed to play for their clubs on Sundays only.

But at press time they were looking for a national coach following the resignation of Argentine Jorge Habegger who complained that he lacked cooperation from the clubs and that he was returning to coach champions Bolivar.

Peru's coach, Jose Fernandez, also complained that clubs would not release their players and that it was no use continuing preparations under these circumstances.

WORLD SOCCER SPOTLIGHT ON ASIA . . . . . BOB PATEMAN REPORTS

HONG KONG WIN INTERPORT CUP

HONG KONG: Hong Kong football, hardly enjoying its happiest year, was given a timely bonus when the national team won the Interport Trophy for the first time in six attempts.

Hong Kong travelled to mainland China to face Guangdong in the first leg and, despite an impressive defensive performance, they went down by a single goal.

Although the lead was narrow, Hong Kong's recent performances left the home fans wondering if their side could win on home soil against a tough Chinese outfit.

Much to general surprise, Hong Kong not only won the return but combined with Guangdong to produce a match of goals and excitement.

If every game was like this, football around the world would have no problems whatsoever!

Key to the home victory was Ted Bredbury, one of the few first class European players involved in Hong Kong football, who had missed the first leg through injury.

The first-half, however, belonged to Guangdong as they not only soaked up every Hong Kong attack but, minutes from the end, scored through Wu Qunli.

Now 2-0 down and with dangerous winger Lai Wing-Cheong on his way to hospital, the match looked over for Hong Kong.

In the opening minutes of the second-half, however, substitute Law Wai-Chu headed home a corner. And then Chan Fat-Chi produced a magnificent overhead kick to tie the aggregate score.

Bredbury, running at the defence, was brought down for the penalty that provided goal number three and the same player then showed a lovely bit of confidence to chip number four over the keeper.

Guangdong pulled one back at the end but nothing was going to stop Hong Kong at that stage.

Over 16,000 fans watched the Interport game but back in the league, the bad news continues with the British Forces team threatening to withdraw from the Second Division because several players have been injured recently.

It was the game with Lung Moon, in which two Forces players ended up in hospital, that brought the matter to the boil.

However, after appealing to the HKFA for referees to tighten control, the Forces have agreed to remain in the league.

After a two-week break, there was a return to action in the First Division with all the top three sides playing.

South China kept up their hopes with a 2-0 win over Tin Tin but Sun Double Flower — in second spot — lost 2-1 to fourth- placed Eastern after looking set for an easy victory.

Leaders Happy Valley suffered a rare penalty defeat to Sing Tao.

THAILAND: A growing number of Thai players are appearing overseas.

South Korea has always been a favourite venue but now two of the country's best known players — striker Piyapong Pueoun and defender Natee Thongsukaew — have moved to Japan, whilst Vorawan Chitawanich, the brightest young star on the scene, is playing in Denmark.

Payao, a team with little reputation, pulled off a major surprise when they eliminated holders Chiang Mai from the Thailand Cup.

The FA have announced a $15,000 first prize for this year's King's Cup. Amongst the sides expected to take part are the Olympic teams from China and Denmark.

BAHRAIN: Bahrain have withdrawn from the 1990 World Cup.

The decision, announced by Sheikh Khaled bin Khalifa, number two in the soccer federation, was said to be due to the lack of a coach and heavy league fixtures.

Bahrain should have been playing Saudi, Syria and North Yemen.

MALAYSIA: After many years of debate, football in Malaysia is to go professional.

Next season, there will be two professional divisions which, it is hoped, will raise the standard of play in the country.

It is also hoped that foreign players might be attracted and that professionalism will end the regular scandals over fixed games.

Large amounts of money change hands in betting syndicates and it is thought that professional players — whose livelihoods would be affected — might not be so easily tempted to take bribes.

Of course, experience elsewhere suggests this is not the case.

PAKISTAN: Hockey, cricket and squash remain the major sports in Pakistan and a country with a population of more than 90 million can claim only 20,000 registered soccer players.

Karachi is the main centre of the sport and the city has an 86,000 seater stadium, although it is seldom full for soccer matches.

Nevertheless, there is a solid foundation for the game.

There are two major championships — the Inter-Provincial Championship and the National Football Championship. Both are staged at one venue to overcome travel problems.

Pakistan International Airlines are the most prestigious side and make regular tours overseas. They have also represented the country in the Asian Club Championship.

Other industrial and commercial teams tend to be at the forefront of domestic football, including Habib Bank, National Steel and Pakistan Railways.

The national team tends to concentrate on the more regional championships and the country stages the annual Quaid-E-Aazam invitation tournament, although this generally attracts a poor field compared with other Asian tournaments.

WITH so many junior tournaments going on around the world, it is becoming difficult to keep up with them all. In December, it was Indonesia's turn to stage the Asian Under-16 competition, with places in Scotland in June at stake.

Iran, not for the first time, dropped out at short notice and Indonesia filled the gap by entering a B team. And they almost had the embarrassment of seeing both their sides reach the Final.

The early rounds saw some delightful play with holders China, Thailand and Indonesia all turning on the skill.

Wingers were in fashion and the 16 games produced 65 goals, an average of 3.6 a game.

Individual stars included Sutamto and Misio of Indonesia, Prasert Changmool of Thailand on the flanks and strikers Yutthana Polsak (Thailand) and Su Maozhen (China) in the centre.

Polsak scored six goals in two games and finished as the tournament's top scorer with eight. However, if anything, it was Su, one goal behind him at the end, who made a bigger impression, if only because, at over six feet tall, he stood out as a giant.

He can certainly use his size and is extremely dangerous in the air.

Thailand and China topped the groups but Indonesia put out the Chinese on penalties in the semi-final and Indonesia B gave Thailand a tough time in the other match before going down 2-1.

The Final itself was surprisingly one-sided, an agressive Indonesian team racing Thailand off their feet to win 4-0.

Perhaps the visitors were disturbed by the, at times, disgraceful behaviour of the 17,000 crowd.

	P	W	D	L	Pts
Thailand	3	3	0	0	6
Indonesia A	3	2	0	1	4
Hong Kong	3	1	0	2	2
Taiwan	3	0	0	3	0

	P	W	D	L	Pts
China	3	3	0	0	6
Indonesia B	3	1	1	1	3
Malaysia	3	0	1	2	1
Singapore	3	0	1	2	1

Semi-finals: Thailand 2 Indonesia B 1; Indonesia A 0 China 0 (Indonesia A win 4-3 on penalties).
Final: Indonesia A 4 Thailand 0.

Jordan's Khaled Awad clears under pressure from Qatar's Ali Salti during a 1-1 World Cup qualifier draw which was marred by two pitch invasions.

CHINA CELEBRATE

THIS year sees the 40th anniversary of the People's Republic of China — and the Chinese FA plan to celebrate with the biggest tournament in the country's history.

The hope is to attract three major European sides to play in a round-robin tournament with the national team.

June has been set aside for the event, when European sides will be free to send their main squads.

Talks

Preliminary talks have started and Barcelona are said to be very interested. Other clubs being mentioned are PSV Eindhoven, Juventus, Roma and Wimbledon.

And considering the future, look out for Wu Chongwen, a member of the Chinese junior team.

After spending a four-week session with Barcelona, he beat 50 competitors from around the world to reach the final four of the Bobby Charlton International Soccer Technique competition.

The Year of the Dragon was a busy and reasonably successful 12 months for Chinese football.

At Seoul, the Chinese national team made its first appearance at a major championship and if its results were disappointing, at least the team was not disgraced.

Just a few weeks later, they reached the semi-finals of the Asian Championships.

The national team were also very proud of their 1-1 draw with Flamengo in the Kirin Invitation Cup although, of course, that is a result which carries more significance in China than in Brazil.

The youth sides were equally busy and the visit of Bobby Charlton and the British tour by the under-16 side was in some ways the major story of the year.

Certainly in Su Maozhen, the Chinese have one of the most promising stars in youth football.

In 1988, two international players — Jia Xiuquan and Liu Haiguang — went abroad to join Partizan Belgrade.

Sign

This brings the total of Chinese players overseas to four, with Xie Yuxing and Shen Xianghi already having had spells in Holland and Japan.

The country also staged a very successful international tournament for women's teams and by doing so, have probably laid the foundations of a future women's World Cup.

But, as soccer on mainland China moves slowly towards world level, there is little sign of any progress on the island of Taiwan.

The Kuomintang supporters fled here in 1949 when Mao lead his communist armies to victory in the long civil war.

Vast financial and military support from the States meant that American culture was imposed on the island and today, soccer is a minor sport, barely getting any coverage from a media that focusses on basketball and baseball.

There are less than 100 registered clubs on the mainland and fewer than 20,000 serious players.

For many years, the national team was strengthened by selecting Hong Kong players of Chinese origin but with the establishment of an independent Hong Kong side, this source was lost.

In recent years, the national team have been unable to hold their own against the likes of Australia or Thailand.

There is an eight team national league, dominated by industrial sides such as Taipei City Bank, Taiwan Power or University sides.

WONDER BOY BOUNCES BACK

CHAN MAN-SHUN is hardly likely to gain a mention in any international 'who's who', yet his personal battle against injury deserves a mention.

Circles

Chan was something of a boy wonder in Hong Kong football circles some eight years ago. He started as a teenage striker with Tung Sing and scored some dramatic goals, which won him a call-up to the national team while still in his teens.

A knee injury put him out of action in 1982 but he returned and moved into the top division with Seiko.

Playing in a team of stars helped his own game and by 1984, he had matured into a talented midfield player and was a regular in the national side.

He played in the Beijing Great Wall Cup and attended a European training camp.

Disaster struck, however, when a second knee operation was required. And, this time, the surgery left an injured nerve and Chan was warned that he might not walk properly again.

Playing certainly seemed out of the question. He was left as a 25-year-old with a limp and no skills or qualifications.

Deciding that football was the only life he knew, Chan defied the doctors and returned to training. He took daily therapy and slowly, the numbness in his leg disappeared.

His old club, Seiko, had disbanded but Happy Valley remembered enough of his skills to take a chance on him.

Support

He got into the side for the 1986-87 season but it was only last year that he looked like rediscovering his old form.

Enjoying the support of new strikers Shuen-Wing and Kam-Hung, Chan leads the league's scoring table and was recalled to the national team for the Interport Trophy.

It was his first cap for six years and marked a magnificent comeback.

Still only 25, Chan might yet get the chance to show his bravery and skills to a wider audience.

AFRICAN NOTEBOOK FROM MARK GLEESON

LIBYA CONCEDE POINTS

THE eccentricity of Libyan leader Muammar Gaddafi spilled over onto the soccer pitch at the start of the second round of Africa's campaign to find two representatives for next year's World Cup finals in Italy.

Gaddafi called a halt to his country's home match against north African neighbours Algeria in Group A of the continental qualifiers and conceded the two points — because Algeria had expressed support for Libya after American air attacks over the Mediterranean in the New Year.

But the cancellation of the match did not go down well with angry fans in Tripoli, who took to the streets to demonstrate against the decision.

Some 70,000 fans were already inside the stadium when the PA announcer passed on the Government's instructions that Libya hand the points to Algeria.

Irate fans, who had already paid for their tickets, refused to leave and chanted demands for the game to go ahead before clashing with the police, who fired shots in the air to disperse the crowd.

The rioting then spread to other parts of the city but there were no casualties, according to reports from the Libyan capital.

Brotherly

The Libyan Soccer Federation issued a statement soon afterwards explaining that the decision expressed appreciation "for the high national and patriotic position which brotherly Algeria held during the Libyan confrontation with the United States".

The statement continued: "The teams of Libya and Algeria are, in fact, one team and between them, there can be no competition."

It added: "Most important is that one strong Arab team reaches the World Cup finals in 1990."

It is expected that FIFA and the Confederation of African Football will take strong action against the Libyans, who have been under suspension previously for refusing to play matches against neighbours Egypt or their subscription fees to CAF headquarters in Cairo.

This leaves Algeria, one of the two African representatives at the 1986 finals in Mexico, in a strong position in Group A, ahead of the Ivory Coast and Zimbabwe.

But Algeria could face disciplinary action of their own after fans stoned the bus carrying the Zimbabwean players and spat at Ghanaian-born coach Ben Koufie before the group's opening match in Annaba.

Algeria won the match easily enough with two goals from forward Djamel Menad in the first-half and another by Portuguese-based Rabah Madjer in the second-half.

Madjer, the hero of Porto's European Cup win in 1987, hinted afterwards that he might consider retiring from international football.

Algeria have maximum points from their two matches, one more than the Ivorians beat Libya at home in the opening tie — although only netting once in a scrappy match — but were then held to a goalless draw in Harare against hosts Zimbabwe two weeks later.

Goalkeeper Alain Gouamene was the visitors' hero, making at least five fine saves to keep the Zimbabwean strikers at bay, with overlapping full-back Mercedes Sibanda catching the eye for the hosts.

Zimbabwe have just one point and must now be realistically out of the running for Italy.

Zambia, too, face possible punishment by FIFA after refusing to relase their European-based professionals between their two Group D matches in January.

Belgian clubs Anderlecht and Cercle Brugge have objected to Zambia's keeping of Charles Musonda and newly-crowned African Footballer of the Year Kalusha Bwalya in between the 1-0 defeat by Morocco in Rabat and the 4-2 win over Zaire in Lusaka.

The Zambians say the players were needed for training.

The presence of Bwalya and the four other Belgian-based players made a considerable improvement to the Zambian side in Rabat but they still went down to a first-half goal from Fes Fettah.

The extra training obviously had the desired effect against Zaire two weeks later, though, as Zambia won 4-2.

Lucky Msiska scored the first goal in the Independance Stadium after 16 minutes, a lead that Derby Makinka extended six minutes later with a blistering long range free-kick.

But French-based Eugene Kabongo pulled one back for Zaire after a defensive blunder by Zambian captain Ashios Melu.

Stone Nyirenda, who, like Msiska, plays in the Belgian Second Division, restored the two-goal lead in the 58th minute and then Bwalya got onto the scoresheet by converting a 79th minute penalty.

Kabongo got his third goal of the qualifiers two minutes later, also from the penalty spot.

Kabongo, voted the French Second Division's best player last year, was also on target two weeks earlier when Zaire beat Tunisia 3-1.

Swiss-based Mapuata netted the other two goals in front of a 90,000 crowd at the 20th of May Stadium in Kinshasa.

Group D remains the most hotly contested and open of all, after Morocco's defeat by Tunisia in Tunis.

Tarek Dhiab, a veteran of Tunisia's appearance in the 1978 finals in Argentina, scored the winner in his country's 2-1 victory, which came after Aziz Bouderbala had netted a third minute goal for Morocco.

Nigeria's three points from their opening two matches can be considered something of a minor miracle after their West German coach Manfred Hoener walked out on the squad just days before the opening match at home to Gabon.

Squabbles

To add to the problems, 15 of the country's leading players boycotted the national team's training camp in December over expense money squabbles.

Locally-based players were upset over the Sports Ministry's decision to fly home four Belgian-based professionals as the team had not played a match since their disappointing showing at the Seoul Olympics.

But they bounced back to beat Gabon 1-0 at Enugu through Wole Odegbami's fifth minute goal and then came from two goals down to draw away in Angola.

The 60,000 crowd in Luanda's Citadella Stadium saw midfielders Vieira Dias and Jesus give Angola a 2-0 lead by the 63rd minute.

But Nigeria scored twice in the space of seven minutes through Stefan Cash and Mike Obiku, who caught goalkeeper Lucio out of position with a speculative long-range shot to get a point from the draw.

The Angolans had shocked African champions Cameroon only 14 days earlier with a 1-1 draw in Yaounde, scoring first through Martins Saavedra of Portuguese First Division club Belenenses in the 11th minute, and holding on to their lead until the final 15 minutes when Bonaventure Djonker equalised for Cameroon.

Cameroon, who lost to Gabon in the final of the UDEAC Cup in December, returned to Libreville to avenge the defeat and set themselves back on course for Italy with a 3-1 win.

Francois Omam Biyik, now recovered from the injury that held up his goalscoring progress with Laval in France, opened for Cameroon in thw 26th minute, only for Regis Mahon to equalise within six minutes from a direct free-kick for Gabon.

Andre Kana Biyik, another French-based import, had the visitors back ahead before the break though and Cameroonian captain Emile M'Bouh netted the third four minutes from time.

In Group B, Malawian midfielder Peterkins Kayira saved his country from a home defeat by Egypt with a goal in the final minute of the tie in Lilongwe.

Hesham Abdel El-Rassouh had the north Africans up after 12 minutes, netting from a corner, and Egypt easily held the East and Central African Senior Challenge Cup holders at bay until the final onslaught.

Egypt head Group B after their earlier 2-0 home win over Liberia, with Kenya and Malawi tied in second place with a point apiece.

Kenya and Malawi drew 1-1 in Nairobi before Kenya went onto a goalless draw away in Liberia.

NIGERIA'S dominance of African junior football looks set to continue with the country scoring a 2-1 away win over Mali in the first leg of the African Youth Cup Final.

The two teams represented Africa in the World Youth Cup in Saudi Arabia but met to contest the first leg of the Tessema Cup Final in Bamako.

Nigeria opened the scoring in the seventh minute with a diving header from Jimoh Balogu and then stretched their lead after 39 minutes when a shot from Christopher Nwogu was deflected into the net by a Malian defender.

Malick Tandjigora pulled one back for Mali with only 12 minutes remaining, leaving Nigeria certainties for their fourth consecutive win in the bi-annual tournament with the return leg in Lagos still to be played.

IN Kenya, Danish coach Jack Johnson, who led Nairobi club Gor Mahia to the African Cup Winners' Cup in 1987, has been banned for life after assaulting a referee following defeat for his league title-chasing team in November.

Johnson, who has been disciplined for threatening behaviour on several previous occasions, was banned for "bringing Kenyan soccer into disrepute" after he and players, George Otieno and Tobias Maira, attacked the referee at a match with Black Mamba.

The two players were suspended for a year.

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MASOCHISM? NO THANKS!

The BRIAN GLANVILLE column

MORE about Millwall. And about violence on and off the terraces. My recent response to criticism by readers led to even more intemperate replies.

Let me inform the wilder of my critics, first, that my Deep Throat isn't paid a penny by me: he is merely a devoted fan.

Second, that I am not sufficient of a masochist ever to have travelled deliberately with a group I knew to have its hooligan quantum.

To return, time and again, to Stuttgart from my travels in the European Championship, never to know where the hell our hotel would be — though it was located further and further away from town — to be subjected to sleepless nights when goons and baboons set off the fire alarm or prowled the corridors, shouting in the small hours, was never my ambition.

One thing I readily admit — I should have been warned by what happened in Lausanne when a once amiable and decently behaved group attracted its proportion of psychos, several of whom were gaoled and then repatriated by the Swiss Police, one of whom, an East London fan, performed such feats of chivalry as walking up to a middle aged Swiss waiting with his wife for a bus and smashing him in the face.

Yes, I agree the England fans abroad are often subjected to provocation but this itself is the consequence of their excesses over the years.

The hard nuts are always waiting for them. Yes, I concede that worse things, much, much worse things, happen abroad than ever happen here.

Let me give you ammunition for your cause, defenders of the English faith.

In Buenos Aires some weeks ago, a footballer who had recently left Racing Club of Avellaneda for the Independiente club was driving along in his car when three Racing fans shot at him. Fortunately he was unscathed.

Boldly and enterprisingly, *El Grafico* — whose 70th birthday has just been celebrated — found out who the assailants were and published photos of them.

Up to the time of writing, no-one has been apprehended by the police. Which prompted *El Grafico* to speculate on whether any of the three thugs had been involved in the shocking events of the subsequent Racing-Boca Juniors game, abandoned by the referee early in the second-half.

Not that the Boca fans could be seen as guiltless. Before the kick-off, they kept up a happy little chant of "We've come to Avellaneda to kill the third", the reference being to two Racing fans who had actually been killed in clashes with Boca.

When the players came back on to the field for the second-half, the Boca men were bombarded by the Racing fans.

The goalkeeper, Navarro Montoya, who has displaced the 45-year-old veteran "Mad" Gatti, collapsed when a firework exploded beside him. The central defender Simon was knocked out by a missile. The referee took the teams off.

And so to Millwall. Jekyll and Hyde. Admirable in many ways, dubious in others.

"Nobody likes us, we don't care," sing the fans, though a group of them, very properly distributing leaflets attacking the insane Thatcherite ID card scheme, pay tribute to the efforts made by the club to clean up its supporters' act. But there is still a long way to go.

Let me quote my Deep Throat, again. This time, he was not standing among the Millwall supporters as he was when they ran riot (however strong the official denial) at Highbury last season.

He was standing NEXT to them among Manchester United fans at the scoreboard end recently at Old Trafford.

Never, he says, has he seen such an intimidating group. Most of them were 29 or 30-years-old; no spring chickens.

They barely bothered to watch the game. They spent their time jeering at and provoking the United supporters, making insults and personal remarks about them.

When Millwall got a corner right in front of them, they weren't watching. When United scored, they actually laughed; then amused themselves by mocking the United fans as they cheered.

A report in the excellent football edition of the *Manchester Evening News* described how the Millwall fans, before the game, ran riot on the concourse and had to be restrained by the police. Who intervened again, most effectively, at the end of the match, when United supporters came round the back of the terraces to attack the Millwall group; who, meanwhile, amused themselves by bombarding United's fans with coins. My Deep Throat says, in all fairness, that he hadn't seen so many United hard nuts at a home game for a very long time. Like calls to like! As when England go abroad.

None of which makes a case for identity cards, a plan which seems more shallow, misguided and inept day by day.

Luton Town, in particular, cut an increasingly poor figure, though I suppose it is hardly their fault that the Government appears to be using them and their very special scheme as a stalking horse.

The point is that Luton exclude away fans; an attitude which I applaud. The ID card scheme doesn't.

But what of Luton's reiterated insistence that despite their scheme, they have been financially successful, increasing their crowds?

Tom Pendry, the impressive

Wimbledon's Eric Young moves away from the grounded Teddy Sheringham of Millwall.

THE son-in-law also rises, as they used to say in Hollywood.

In this case, he is rising in Rio, with the possibility that in some five years' time, we might have him inflicted upon us in Zurich.

He is the new president of the Brazilian Football Confederation, Ricardo Teixeira, and his father-in-law is the infinitely loveable, deeply self-effacing president of FIFA, our friend Joao Havelange.

What Havelange wants at FIFA, Havelange invariably gets. South America is his, the Afro-Asians would fling themselves at his feet for another place in an already lop-sided World Cup, the crawlers and parasites and fawners and sycophants never cease to sing his praises.

So you have been warned. A dynasty may well be in the process of creation.

Liverpool's John Barnes . . . a fan of the San Francisco 49ers.

COMPARISONS are not only odious. When they are made between our own soccer and American gridiron football, they are fatuous.

The matter was thrown into relief at a recent televised "live" match. A manager of one of the clubs involved took me aside to say that what infuriated him was the way the advertised kick-off time had been held up to cater for television.

That, I told him, was nothing; though it bore out my warning of what would happen were soccer ever to sell itself to television.

American pro football, I pointed out, was the creation, even the prostitute, of television. There had been an occasion in the so-called Super Bowl — an equivalent of our Cup Final — more or less, when the game kicked-off twice, once for television, and once in earnest.

Professional gridiron football came a remote second to the college game in the States until television took it over. In recent years — a point conveniently glossed over by its apologists here — it has massively lost popularity, with audiences declining, income from television diminishing, rich and famous commentators, such as Howard Cosell, being jettisoned.

Fewer and fewer young people are playing the violent, dangerous and over-regimented game. More and more — countless thousands of them — are playing soccer all over that huge country.

Though there has been violence at American football games, the phenomenon of the away fan is largely unknown: hence no fighting between rival groups of supporters.

By comparision with this country, a miniscule number of clubs contest the American championships. If the share-out of television money enables small town teams such as the Green Bay Packers to flourish, what of the success this season of the likes of Millwall and Norwich City?

Moreover, though the Green Bay Packers — originally inspired by their celebrated coach Vince Lombardi — may have had their major successes, there is no royal route from the bottom to the top in the static American game, little or no chance for a Wimbledon to rise from amateurism and obscurity to victory in the Cup Final.

Nor, let me say, is there any evidence of the hideous prevalence of injuries, the dehumanised emphasis on violence, the widespread addiction to cocaine, to be found in the American game.

To its English apologists, I send a brief message. Behave yourselves!

chairman of the House of Commons football committee, has strongly disputed this and the *Daily Mirror* recently alleged that the club was £2 million in debt.

It has also been said that Luton's chief motive for introducing their scheme, such as it is, was to protect visiting fans from assault by local hooligans.

Indeed, the statistics on violence in the town centre of Luton suggest that such a policy was well-founded.

David Evans, the chairman of Luton, pulled off the remarkable feat of getting himself an ovation at the Tory annual conference before he had even been elected an MP.

But what's good for Mr Evans has scarcely been good for the game, and his own public pronouncements on the subject of ID cards have been increasingly contentious.

Not that Luton, with their ban on away fans and its microscopic attendances, could ever be much of an examplar.

What is beyond dispute is that immense delays would occur, with concomitant possibilities of violence, were the scheme to be implemented, not merely because, as seen at Plymouth, the sheer functioning of the cards remains in deep doubt (Plymouth had to abandon their scheme in despair) but because whatever method is used, there is bound to be argument and consequent delays if and when a fan is refused admission.

Moreover, the much-trumpeted intention to make fans arrested AND convicted of football-related offences attend special centres on the days of foreign international matches played by England is a laughable red herring.

As has been pointed out, powers to oblige offenders to attend such centres already exist, and are barely used. Moreover, as Mrs Beeton used to say, first catch your hare.

To arrest and chuck out a fan is one thing — and in any given disturbance, he is likely to be one of dozens, scores or hundreds.

Actually to bring him to court and produce the evidence to convict him is quite another. The scheme falls down in sheer numerical terms. A snare and a delusion.

The perverse obstinacy shown by Mrs Thatcher and her egregious minion Colin Moynihan has been thoroughly deplorable and worthy of an infinitely better cause.

Those journalists of the football press who have espoused it have done themselves no credit and the game at large no favour. There are many other weaknesses in the scheme, not least the manifest need of more rather than fewer policemen to enforce it, but that will be enough for the moment.

If, and when, the law is passed in Parliament, it will surely collapse under the weight of its own ambiguities.

A MOUNTAIN OUT OF A MOLEHILL

THE Brian Clough affair. However ill-advised and potentially dangerous the Forest manager's behaviour on the night of the QPR League Cup tie, it was surely blown up out of all logical proportion.

The day after, I was asked to go on ITN television at lunch-time to comment on the incident. Go I did, assuming that the item would, as we say in Fleet Street — or what's left of it — be well down page.

Not a bit of it. It was the leading topic and I found myself being brought in very early in the programme with far more than the usually permitted couple of sentences as my allowance.

My chief reaction was one of annoyance that, at a time of major catastrophe, terrorism, political flux and change, the inauguration of a new American President, anything so ultimately trivial should be given such projection; and I said so.

I added for good measure that perhaps it was time to expand the 11th commandment: from Thou Shalt Not Be Found Out to Thou Shalt Not Be Found Out By Television.

And I gave as an instance the case of Arsenal's Paul Davis, banned for nine weeks after TV had shown him left hooking Southampton's Glenn Cockerill from behind and breaking his jaw.

Compare that, I suggested, with the Wimbledon Tunnel Affair, in which squalid things had gone on, both players had come up before the beat at Lancaster Gate but each, by comparision with Davis, had escaped with a derisory punishment.

This is not to defend Clough's highly intemperate behaviour which could well have caused more trouble and violence than it ever prevented, if indeed it did.

What if all those fans had suddenly turned on him and attacked him? Nottingham Forest, by now, might well have appointed a new manager.

Clough's stormy career has been peppered with controversial, sometimes explosive, incidents, so well and fully recounted in Tony Francis' excellent biography *Clough*.

But books are one thing, being shown to the nation on television is quite another. And selling one's story to *The Sun* another thing again. But let that, for the moment, pass.

EXCLUSIVE

WORLD SOCCER INTERVIEWS ALBANIAN MANAGER SHYQYRI RRELI

HISTORIC GAME AND RESULT?

THE MANAGER with one of the most awkward names in the game, Albania's Shyqyri Rreli, has a blunt warning for England.

In an exclusive interview with World Soccer he said: "This game will be a historic event for Albanian football because it is the first time England, the home of football, will have sent their national team to play in Tirana.

"But, let me make it perfectly clear, though we have enormous respect for English football we shall do our utmost to achieve what we might also call an historic result.

"But, I must warn our supporters, too. When you have never previously played against a team — never mind how many times you have seen them on television — you cannot really know all there is to know about their strengths and weaknesses and their little secrets.

"That is why I think that, while coming here to Tirana will be difficult for England, this match will also be a difficult one for us.

"Remember, too, that England have their 'ambassador'. Gary Lineker has played four times for Barcelona against our club Flamurtari in European competitions.

"From those matches he will have learned something about our football and about our players.

"As far as our team is concerned, we shall use virtually the same line-up as against Sweden in our first match in this World Cup qualifying group.

"I may make one or two minor changes, but that is all.

"Since we lost 2-1 at home to Sweden we have played against Greece, drawing 1-1 in a friendly match. I was not too happy about our performance in that match.

"But then again, maybe that was a good thing. Our performance that day said a lot about the current state of team morale and attitude as well as about the shortcomings — technical and tactical — which we must put right before we kick off against England.

"This is not being pessimistic, this is being realistic. But there is one other factor I think your readers should know: Foreign teams have always found trying to win in the Qemal Stafa stadium a very difficult task . . ."

To add to Rreli's comments, events prove that Albanians are not the sort of footballers likely to lie down quietly whatever the traditions and history of their opponents, however illustrious they may be.

For example:

★ The national team once went five years without playing an international against European rivals because they could not find 'suitable' opponents;

★ When Celtic had to play a European Cup-tie in Tirana the Albanian authorities authorised only nine visas for players (it took a protest to UEFA and an expulsion threat to get a full team in);

★ No fewer than four senior Albanian internationals were sent off in a rage when their club, Partizani, crashed 4-0 to Benfica of Portugal in a Champions' Cup-tie.

One of those four players was goalkeeper Perlat Musta, for years reckoned the most sporting of Albanian stars.

He was not only the national team's keeper, he was also their captain and footballer of the year.

If Albanians are raw round the edges when it comes to the basic courtesies of international sport, it is hardly surprising.

Albania is the most reclusive totalitarian state in Europe. For years their Communist leaders held this Adriatic nation in a time warp.

One by one they cut ties with even their fellow Communists in Eastern Europe and round the world until only China would talk to them.

Then even the Chinese became impatient with the rulers of a state that the most lurid rumours began to speculate abroad that private citizens were forbidden to own cars, that the menfolk locked up their wives at home during the day and that the only status symbol available was a new bicycle.

Albania's image has not been helped in the last couple of years, either, by the problems across the northern border in the Yugoslav region of Kosovo where the Albanian community is deadlocked against the Serbs.

Ironically, it was against Yugoslavia that Albania played their first-ever international. But that was a long time after the game was first organised at the start of the 1900s.

The introductions, of course, were made by foreign residents. A famous fledgling club named Independencia was launched in Skoder but the first championship — exclusively organised among the foreigners — collapsed in chaos at the outbreak of the first world war.

It took the influence of various occupying forces in the 1920s to reintroduce the game and this time the locals were encouraged to join in.

In 1928 King Zog came to the throne and sports activities were, for the first time, recognised as a legitimate area of governmental concern.

In 1930 a Sports Ministry was set up and this spawned, two years later, a quasi-autonomous football federation.

A national league was now under way, dominated initially by SK Tirana, and Albania even went as far as to join FIFA in 1932. Unfortunately political unrest in the Balkans meant that it was not until 1946 that the national team made their debut against their Yugoslav neighbours.

The result was a 3-2 defeat but Albania's players and officials were not discouraged and continued to play their Communist neighbours until political differences shut the borders in 1953.

Not for another decade were the Albanians seen in western Europe. Then the dubious reward for their first venture was a 4-0 beating by Denmark in Copenhagen.

The best all-round player produced by Albania in this post-war era has been Panajot Pano, a star of the 1950s and early 1960s.

He still holds — jointly with Loro Borici — the record of 24 international appearances. But very few other Albanians have made themselves known beyond the Balkans, though several did play briefly in Italy.

In the 1940s, after Italy's annexation of Albania, several leading clubs took advantage to swoop on leading local players to bolster their attacks.

One of the most successful was

from GEZIM NUSHI in Tirana

Riza Lushta. Born in a village called Mitrovica on February 22, 1916, Lushta was signed by no less a club than Juventus in the summer of 1940.

In his first season in Calcio he scored 10 goals in 26 games. Juventus finished 'only' fifth but Lushta had been a success and carried on the following season to finish as the Turin club's top scorer with a further 15 goals in 26 games.

This time Juventus had moved up to third place, albeit seven points behind neighbours and new champions Torino. But for Lushta, that was that.

The Italian league fell victim to the war and potentially the best years of his career were wiped away.

After the peace was signed Internazionale, mindful of Lushta's potential, were minded to give a season's trial to Nicolas Simatoc, a refugee who had come to Italy via Rumania.

He played a handful of matches over two seasons before spending a season in the second division with Brescia and then retiring.

Other Albanians to find first division homes in Italy were Dinu Biciaku, a forward from Elbasan who played in the Italian first division with now-forgotten Vogherese just after the war, Borici — another of Albania's greats — who spent two years with Lazio just before the war, and Naim Krieziu — the best-remembered of them all (in Italy, at least).

Krieziu, born on New Year's Day 1918, was a lively right winger with SK Tirana, who were four times champions in the 1930s.

In 1939 Krieziu signed for Roma and stayed loyal right through to 1947, when he began a happy five-season spell with Napoli. Later Krieziu turned with some success to coaching and was briefly in charge of Roma during the early 1960s when millionaire president Marina-Dettina paid a then world record £250,000 for Brazil's Angelo Sormani.

That was all a very long way from Albanian football — and still is.

Albania, of course, now compete regularly in the World Cup and European championship but they have never progressed beyond the qualifying rounds.

Facilities in Albania are spartan. The national stadium — named after Qemal Stafa, a Communist Party leader executed in 1941 by the Nazis — has a capacity of only 30,000.

But there is sure to be a full house to see the England match even though ticket prices will be high by Albanian standards . . . at an exchange equivalent of 50p.

The team they will support are no mugs. Sweden struggled to a 2-1 win in Tirana and sweeper Glenn Hysen warned: "Albania are much better than we had expected.

"If the run of the ball had been different we could easily have lost 3-2 instead of winning."

Musta is missing from the game now because of the long domestic suspension imposed after his misbehaviour in Lisbon. There had been speculation that he might be pardoned in time for the England match but that appears a non-starter now — even though manager Rreli is concerned about how his new keepers, Mersini and/or Shkurti may stand up to the aerial attack he expects.

Albania's attack at the other end will be carried by Musta's successor as national captain, Arben Minga, with the ammunition being supplied by Sulejman Demollari, a skilful midfielder who plays for the police club, Dinamo Tirana.

In other countries and societies they would be considered stars. But not in egalitarian Albania.

Many of them travel to their home league matches by bicycle. England, they believe, could soon be imitating them.

Or, at least, the local equivalent of "On yer bike" is the message they intend to hand Robson, Lineker and Co!

THE MANAGER

Shyqyri RRELI. Aged 48. An outstanding player in the mid-1950s with Dinamo Tirana, a member of their championship-winning team on four occasions and four times capped for Albania. Rreli is without doubt the most knowledgeable coach in the country. Coaching courses in Cologne and in Italy were features of his grooming for the national team managership which he first took over in 1982. Previously Rreli was in charge of the under-21s for three years and it was on this squad that he based the national team which scored an excellent win over Belgium — prospective semi-finalists — in the qualifiers for the 1986 World Cup. At the start of 1986 Rreli was succeeded as national manager by Agron Sulaj but was reappointed last summer.

THE SQUAD

Halim MERSINI. Goalkeeper. Aged 27 (born September 22, 1961) with four caps. Plays for 17 Nentori (which means August 17) of Tirana. Since Perlat Musta's suspension Mersini has been unchallenged for most of the time as Albania's top goalkeeper. He has a reputation for safe handling and excellent reflexes.

Sotir SHKURTI. Goalkeeper. Aged 26 (born August 27, 1962) with three caps. Besa. A fast-improving deputy for Mersini. Shkurti is known to be brave and secure when the ball is flying around the penalty box in the air — but not so good with ground-shots.

Hysen ZMIJANI. Right back. Aged 25 (born April 24, 1963) with 25 caps. Vllaznia Skoder. Plays fullback but still thinks like the forward he once was and loves nothing better than to attack. Despite being a defender he is his club's top scorer in the championship so far this season with seven goals.

Skender HODJA. Centre back/sweeper. Aged 28 (born May 30, 1960) with 15 caps. Plays for 17 Nentori. One of the pillars of both his club and the national team. Probably the best Albanian defender in the air.

Skender GEGA. Centre back. Aged 25 (born November 14, 1963) with seven caps. Partizani Tirana. Reputed to be the Albanian defender with the best distribution, helping him to turn defence effectively into counter-attack. Together with Millo and Shehu he forms the backbone of the Partizani team who have led the championship for virtually all the season.

Artur LEKBELLO. Centre back/stopper. Aged 23 (born February 23, 1966) with six caps. Solid defender who is Albania's best marker of the opposition's key attacker.

Bardhyl JERA. Left back. Aged 29 (born February 8, 1960) with ten caps. Vllaznia Skoder. Plays fullback for the national team but in midfield for his club.

Krenar ALIMEHMETI. Defender. Aged 22 (born August 17, 1966) with one cap. 17 Nentori Tirana. One of the younger players recently introduced to the squad by manager Rreli.

Dashnor BITA. Defender. Aged 26 (born October 21, 1962) with no caps as yet. Apolonia. Together with club-mates Tole and Majaci he has recently been brought into the squad after the success of his club in the championship where, this season, they have presented the only serious provincial challenge to the dominance of the Tirana clubs 17 Nentori, Partizani and Dinamo.

Roland ILADHI. Defender. Aged 25 (born August 18, 1963) with two caps. Flamurtari Vlore. Energetic defender who is now back in national team contention after injury.

Mirel JOSA. Midfield. Aged 25 (born June 1, 1963) with 18 caps. 17 Nentori Tirana. Hardworking midfielder who came up through the juniors and the under-21s.

Sulejman DEMOLLARI. Midfield. Aged 24 (born May 15, 1964) with 18 caps. Dinamo Tirana. One of Albania's most talented players and the key man in midfield. His penetrative passing provides their most dangerous creative weapon. Demollari made his Albania debut in a 1-0 defeat by Northern Ireland when he was just 18.

Lefter MILLO. Midfield. Aged 22 (born April 2, 1966) with five caps. Partizani Tirana. Current Footballer of the Year. Began his career in his home town of Gjirokaster with Luftetari .

Ilir KEPA. Midfield. Aged 22 (born April 21, 1966) with two caps. Vllaznia Skoder. Skilful newcomer to the national squad but short on strength and stamina.

Pandeli TOLE. Midfield. Aged 28 (born May 15, 1960) with no caps as yet. Apolonia. Current top scorer in the championship with 11 goals.

Arben MINGA. Forward. Aged 29 (born March 16, 1959) with 27 caps. 17 Nentori Tirana. National team captain since the suspension and sacking of goalkeeper Perlat Musta.

Ylli SHEHU. Centre forward. Aged 22 (born March 18, 1966) with four caps. Partizani Tirana. One of Albania's best recent discoveries. Skilful attacking leader who was their best player in the Tirana World Cup defeat by Sweden.

Kujtim MAJACI. Striker. Aged 26 (born March 20, 1962) with one cap. Apolonia. One of the most dangerous centre forwards in domestic competition, having twice been the championship's top scorer in recent seasons.

Agim BUBEQI. Forward. Aged 25 (born April 7, 1963) with four caps. Flamurtari Vlore. The one Albanian forward with a reputation for his ability in the air.

Athens victory is just what Robson wanted

ENGLAND'S 2-1 victory over Greece in Athens was just what manager Bobby Robson wanted ahead of the trip into the Albanian unknown.

He explained: "Playing Greece here was valuable experience for everyone in the squad.

"The Albanians have similar types of players, with similar temperament. We have never played there before or against the Albanians so it's going to be a difficult match in Tirana, of course it is.

"But I think we'll get a good result for ourselves and for the fans back home. I tell you one thing: we will be difficult to beat.

"The Greece match lacked a little bit of urgency but I think we made more chances and I was happy with the way everything worked out.

"We needed the win desperately and it was our competitive spirit over the last ten minutes or so which won us the match.

"When you get off to a start like we did — conceding a penalty in the second minute — and end up winning you've got to be pleased. And Bryan Robson's goal was a goal to win any game.

"It hasn't done the players any good, being hit over the head as many times as we have in the last six months.

"But this will restore some confidence and belief and is just what we needed to plan our campaign in Albania.

"I honestly believe this England team and this manager are going to the 1990 World Cup finals. I have stressed all along that we would get there and nothing has happened to change my mind.

"For years people have been telling me to do one thing or another but I am my own man, I make up my own mind.

"Albania will be better than Greece. They might be a bit harder and bit more skilful in certain positions.

"When I saw them against Sweden I was quite astonished by their technical ability. They should have beaten the Swedes and done so on merit — not because of the crowd or the pitch.

"I'm not afraid of Albania but I know we have to go there and give a good all-round performance. If any three players perform badly we certainly won't win and we could be in trouble."

Nine English league matches have been postponed from the March 4 programme to help Robson's preparations.

Only two of the ten first division matches survive — Norwich v Southampton and Sheffield Wednesday v Charlton since none of the players from those clubs (even though Norwich are second in the table!) will feature in Robson's squad.

Also postponed is the second division match between Chelsea and Sunderland.

England manager Bobby Robson in Athens.

CENTENARY . . . CELEBRATIONS

DENMARK . . . by JIM HOLDEN

DANISH football enters its second century this year feverishly working to secure a prosperous future.

The Danes will celebrate their centenary as the second oldest soccer nation in style — the centrepiece is a match against England on June 7.

But 1989 will be more important for the success, or otherwise, of changes designed to improve domestic standards and thus international consistency.

Five First Division clubs have followed the lead of champions Brondby by going public on the stock market to raise funds.

Two others — Lyngby and B1903 — began merger talks. The idea is that by combining the best of both, they might prove viable rivals to 'superclub' Brondby.

OB, the top club in Odense, are also attracted to the idea. They are considering a union with one or more of three other clubs in the city — B1909, B1913 and OKS — to become, of all things, Odense United.

Naestved are taking a different track. They signed a lucrative five-year partnership with 1FC Koln of the Bundesliga.

The Danish club will act as a type of nursery for the Germans, who already have three Danes in Flemming Povlsen, Morten Olsen and Jann Jensen on their books.

Naestved's move prompted AGF and Vejle to begin similar negotiations, one of which is believed to involve Bayern Munich.

B1903 had talks with Tottenham Hotspur but the upshot of those was merely the loan move of teenager Tommy Fitzgerald to the Copenhagen club.

Gary Gray, younger brother of QPR midfielder Andy, joined Randers Freja on trial.

More traditional transfer activity out of Denmark concerned under-21 star Mark Strudal, who joined Borussia Dortmund.

Frank Pingel of AGF left for Newcastle United and will be joined by team-mate Bjorn Kristensen if, or when, Mirandinha leaves Tyneside.

Former Danish international Frank Arnesen, who had to quit playing through injury last summer, has begun a new job in the game as assistant manager at B1913, newly promoted to the First Division which starts in April.

DRESDEN ARE THE TOP DRAW

EAST GERMANY . . . by BOB VAUGHAN

ONE encouraging fact to emerge from the first-half of the East German season is the trend on the spectator front.

Around 873,000 fans attended the 1987/88 autumn matches. In the current season, the comparative figure has risen to 953,630.

The top attraction were Dynamo Dresden, whose home game with Dynamo Berlin attracted 36,000 spectators, the same number as for the Saxons' three home ties in the UEFA Cup.

The league leaders averaged 22,143, as against 19,286 in 1987/88.

Second best was Hansa's average of 18,500 in Rostock, followed, astonishingly, by promoted Energie Cottbus with 12,371.

Attracting the least support at home were FC Carl Zeiss in Jena, only 5,514; promoted Sachsenring, 6,843; and, surprisingly, Lok.

Only 6,971 saw the Railwaymen, on average, in the Bruno-Plache Stadion, very poor for one of the Republic's top clubs.

Goal totals were also disappointing — only 265 were scored for an average of 2.91 per game. Last season at the halfway mark, the figures were 271 and 2.98.

Best goal difference is Dresden's with Wismut Aue in second spot, respectively 11-plus and seven-plus.

The poorest is the figure shared by FC Rot-Weiss Erfurt and Dynamo Berlin — minus ten.

The false dawn of BFC's European Cup first round, first leg win over Werder Bremen has left its mark on Juergen Bogs' side.

Some of his 'actors' are among those taking the blame for the World Cup qualifying defeat in Istanbul and the 'Policemen' will need to show a consistency lacking before the break when the second-half of the season begins with a visit to Halle.

Aue then visit Dimitroff-Strasse, which is followed by a derby clash against Union.

New national team manager, 'No Nonsense' Zapf, will have his eye on performances and even top star Thom will be having to justify his place with better form.

Another whose career needs a boost is former first choice goalkeeper Rene Mueller.

Six months ago, Mueller was the national team captain. But now he can't even get into the squad following a disastrous Lok start to the season.

BFC are currently out of the medal positions for the first time in ten seasons, three places below last year's ranking. It is the worst season since Dynamo came fifth in December 1975.

On the positive side, the five goals scored by Lok's Halata against Sachsenring has only ever been bettered by Joachim Streich of 1.FC Magdeburg, who scored six on June 9, 1979, in the ten-goal trouncing of Chemie Boehlen. It is the only double hat- trick in East German soccer history.

During the first part of the 1988/89 season, six other hat- tricks were recorded.

Twelve months ago, Thom of BFC had left everyone in his wake with 14 autumn goals. This time, he languishes on five behind the two Dresden hot shots Kirsten and Guetschow.

Away wins are up to 21. This is the best figure since the 23 of 1983/84.

Two-thirds of these victories went into the points accounts of the top three clubs while at the foot of the table, Energie and Zwickau have yet to win away.

Back with the goalscorers, it appears that forwards accounted for 54.51 per cent of the scores as against 62 per cent last season.

Midfielders are, however, on target more often. They notched just over 31 per cent of the goals (18 per cent in 1987/88) although the backs were, on the other hand, less accurate at five per cent down.

The penalty expert was Steinmann of FCK with three on target from three attempts. Only just over two-thirds of those awarded were converted, 23 out of 33.

EINDHOVEN LEAD THE CHASE AGAIN

HOLLAND . . . by SIMON KUPER

THE top of the Dutch league is taking on a familiar shape with PSV Eindhoven leading, Ajax close behind in second place and Feyenoord third.

These three clubs, usually in that order, have dominated Dutch football in the eighties.

Nobody expected the league to be at all exciting this season as PSV looked sure to take their fourth successive title. But the Eindhoven side have been below par all season and Ajax are now just three points behind them.

PSV were also humiliated by KV Mechelen in the recent Supercup. The Dutch played terribly in both legs of the Final, and lost 3-1 on aggregate.

PSV manager Guus Hiddink is now very worried about the coming confrontation with Real Madrid in the quarter-final of the European Cup.

Real want revenge for their defeat by PSV in last year's semi-final. PSV's goalkeeper Hans van Breukelen is out for the season and there are many other injuries.

Hiddink is also concerned about the state of mind of his key player Ronald Koeman. Will Koeman still care about PSV, now that he has signed a lucrative contract to join Barcelona next season?

Ajax are much happier than their rivals. Their young team may lack flair but they have completely recovered from the disastrous start to the season which left the club in 13th place in October.

Ajax have also appointed a new board. The club's chairman is now Michael van Praag, the son of former Ajax chairman Jaap van Praag.

Michael, 41, is a successful Amsterdam businessman, the director of the Duty Free Record Store.

The younger Van Praag is a friendly, approachable man, whose employees call him by his first name. He played little football himself but had quite a successful career as a referee in amateur football.

His immediate task as chairman of Ajax will be to reorganise completely the club's structure and to appoint an all-powerful technical director. Ajax's board will be reduced from five to three members to allow for quicker decisions.

Johan Cruyff is rejoicing in Barcelona at what is happening in Amsterdam. Cruyff had to leave Ajax a year ago because he was demanding the very same changes in the club's structure that are being carried out now.

The board of the day ridiculed his ideas, so Cruyff is delighted to have been proved right after all.

He is also pleased that his good friend Michael van Praag is the new chairman. The two men share the same progressive ideas.

Cruyff has just renewed his contract with Barcelona by two years but if things go wrong at the volatile club, Ajax are bound to snap him up.

Thijs Libregts is another manager who is angry about poor organisation.

Libregts, who manages the Dutch national side, has been asking the Dutch FA to appoint a "team manager" to organise matters around internationals.

The manager would be in charge of everything from hotels to practice matches. The FA is refusing Libregts' request.

Libregts complains that the best team in Europe is surrounded by incompetent officials. He is furious because, on Holland's recent tour of Israel, these officials were too busy sunbathing and floating on the Dead Sea to fix up a practice game for Holland against a local side.

In the end, some Dutch journalists and the Adidas representative organised it.

Rinus Michels, Libregts' predecessor, left his post because of the Dutch FA's incompetence. Lebregts could go the same way.

Holland's FA have not even been able to set up an ID-card system. They planned a scheme, which was intended to apply to the five clubs with the worst supporters, to start in January.

But even now, too many details are still incomplete for the plan to come into operation.

The fans are furious at the proposals and are showing their anger by planting bombs everywhere.

The scheme has already caused more problems than it is likely to solve. It might not be ready before the end of the season, which is probably a good thing.

Dutch clubs are already signing new managers for next season. Han Berger will move from Utrecht to Fortuna Sittard, and homesick Rinus Israel will return to Holland from PAOK Salonika to manage Den Bosch.

DERBY DELAY

CZECHOSLOVAKIA . . . by BOB VAUGHAN

NO sooner had Kubik and Knoflicek done the publicity rounds at Derby and appeared in 'Ram's wool' than there was talk of complications if, in fact, the ex-Slavia midfield man had signed a pre-contract with Fiorentina.

The players appear to have returned to their hideout in southern Europe but should the Italian club's case be upheld, who knows when or where the two Czech internationals might become eligible to play again?

It will be of little comfort to Slavia or national team manager Doctor Venglos as he prepares the national squad for further games in World Cup group seven.

A friendly in Nice was won 2-0 against an OGC side currently in sixth place but the opposition in the Heysel Stadium will be of a vastly different quality.

In Slovakia, there is a chance one of Slovan's best players Vladimir Weiss may be on the move, though not westwards.

Dynamo Kiev, who have excellent contacts in Bratislava and often play winter break friendlies in the city as warm-ups to European Cup games, are interested in Weiss.

One wonders what the financial benefits would be if he moves to the second professional Soviet club?

JAN WOUTERS . . . happier times at Ajax.

MALTA SNATCH POINT

HUNGARY . . . by BOB VAUGHAN

WITH team manager number six installed since the Mexico World Cup disaster, Hungarian football will be looking for some light to come out of its darkest tunnel.

It is not, however, on the horizon. There is no MLSZ (FA) president and not likely to be one until new elections in March; the championship is still likely to be influenced — an unfortunate choice of words — by matches which may be judged to have been 'fixed'; and due to the continuing police enquiries, certain players are not in action, or even training, with their clubs, let alone the national side.

It was, therefore, hardly a surprise that a point was dropped to Malta but Bertalan Bicskei has said his goal is qualification for Italy and Spain's victory at Windsor Park has opened up the way.

He is well-qualified for the task, having graduated from the famous coaching school in Cologne and having cut his teeth at Honved where he had kept goal.

The national pool of players is spending the break in a Yugoslav training camp in preparation for the Budapest encounter with Jack Charlton's men.

On the club front, Gyorgy Mezey's former assistant Jozsef Both is the new chief in Kispest. His Honved side may be hard-pressed to regain the title and a UEFA place will be the minimum expected.

Much-capped Dezso Novak is the new Haladas manager while MTK are letting Seibert leave for Greece.

His replacement is a golden oldie, none other than the colourful Andreas Torocsik, who had been seeing out his career with Second Division Volan.

What will the 'Enfant Terrible' of Hungarian football get up to back in the top flight? Let's hope a Roman summer at 33 years of age!

Meanwhile, Torocsik's successor as the national team's play- maker has been back in Budapest.

In a deposition to the police, Lajos Detari claims that the match his colleagues sold to Debrecen when they had already won the title two years ago brought them half a million forints.

He hopes to return from Athens again to face the Republic of Ireland. By then, the enquiry should be complete and the spotlight can be put again on events on the field.

BERTALAN BICSKEI'S very first Hungarian selection faces European Championship finalists Republic of Ireland in Budapest on March 8 when each country has an invitation to enhance their chances of winning a ticket to Italy next year.

Spain's fourth win in as many matches of European qualifying group six of the World Cup — 2-0 over Northern Ireland in Belfast on February 8 — has left the Republic and Hungary to decide second place in the group.

The 44-year-old Bicskei, who succeeded Gyorgy Mezey, had his home-based squad working hard in Yugoslavia for three weeks in January and February.

Placing the emphasis on accurate passing, intelligent running and slick use of the offside trap — qualities employed by his Budapest Honved team, whose championship triumph last season has been scarred by the match-fixing scandal — Bicskei can hope to have available only Istvan Vincze (Lecce, Italy) and possibly Lajos Detari (Olympiakos, Greece) of Hungary's foreign-based players because of others being implicated in the bunda.

But the cool-headed former goalkeeper, who played in nearly 200 league matches for Honved, will have no qualms about entrusting responsibility to players he nurtured as a manager of the 1984 Under-18 European Championship-winning team in Moscow and the 1986 Under-21 European Championship semi-finalists, who lost to eventual winners Spain.

GATES DOWN ON '88

WEST GERMANY . . . by ARTHUR ROTMIL

AFTER a winter break of 11 weeks, the West German Bundesliga resumed its programme in mid-February under a cloud.

The first-half of the season had brought disappointing figures in attendances and goalscoring, while the long lay-off contributed even further to the financial problems which beset the vast majority of clubs.

In fact, out of the 18 clubs in the top division, only three, Bayern Munich and the 'works' teams of Bayer Leverkusen and Uerdingen, are economically healthy.

The rest are in debt, some far worse than the DFB (FA) are prepared to admit.

Altogether, 2.77 million fans saw matches in the first phase of the season, some 590,000 fewer that at the corresponding period last term.

Surprisingly, the Second Division showed a rise of 200,000 customers to a total of 1.1 million. No one can explain the exact reasons for the big difference in interest, though it is thought that a number of factors contributed to the lowest attendances since 1972-73, the year after the Bunesliga bribery scandal.

At the half-way mark, the average gate dropped from 21,462 to 18,131 per match.

Clubs like 1.FC Nurnberg and Eintracht Frankfurt reported only 14,889 and 13,395 per game, yet they need 20,000 to break even.

It is true that such stars as Matthaus, Brehme, Prytz, Okonski and Detari have left the Bundesliga, but this alone doesn't explain the big decline in interest.

Experts have suggested a few reasons for the slump, amongst them:

★ Bad management at Frankfurt and Nurnberg, which caused the departure of star players and subsequently the biggest loss in interest and revenue.

★ The fans' disenchantment with bottom-placed Waldhof Mannhein, who have been forced to move into another stadium at Ludwigshafen.

★ The catastrophic fixing of the championship programme at the start of the holiday season in July, the three-week Olympic pause and yet another break to accommodate an international.

★ The endless tug-of-war over television broadcasts and subsequent saturation with long transmissions designed by the private cable TV channels.

Fortunately, the new television fees raise from £6 million to £13.2 million per annum to help the clubs to plug the holes in their budgets.

The goalscoring exploits were also way behind expectations. The total of 412 goals, on average 2.7 per match, was medicore — only in 1968-69 was the figure lower on 2.25. Yet, it would be wrong to draw from all these tales of woe the conclusion that West German football is bad. It is certainly better than the German media are often portraying it.

Perhaps in no other country is the criticism so constant, so negative and often so exaggerated as in West Germany.

If few goals are scored, then the football writers and commentators moan about the lack of marksmen. If the attackers find the net regularly and often, then the critics harp about the poor defending!

There were actually many positive aspects of the Bundesliga's first stage of the championship.

Promoted St Pauli for example, Karlsruher SC and Bayern Munich have all impressed in their various ways.

St Pauli boast the most promising manager in Helmut Schulte (31), a former unemployed teacher who arrived originally via an employment office to train the juniors.

He has since taken over from Willi Reimann, who left for Hamburg, and has led the inexperienced side to tenth place in the table.

The fans are thrilled and have been flocking to the relatively small Willhelm Koch Stadium (capacity 21,000) which, throughout the first stage, was on average 90 per cent full!

In Karlsruher, coach Winfried Schafer has propelled a young team without stars to sixth place, and is dreaming of a UEFA Cup spot.

There, too, crowds are up, 24,056 on average — the club needs 12,000 to cover its budget.

At Bayern Munich, under-fire manager Jupp Heynckes is beginning to fulfil the expectations of the highly discerning supporters.

Bayern are one of four Bundesliga clubs who have reached the quarter-finals of all three European competitions.

They have wisely refrained from demanding exorbitant admission prices for their UEFA Cup tie with Hearts, which they expect to win.

But they did halve the players' promised win bonuses, as compared to the £3,120 they got for eliminating Inter Milan in the previous round!

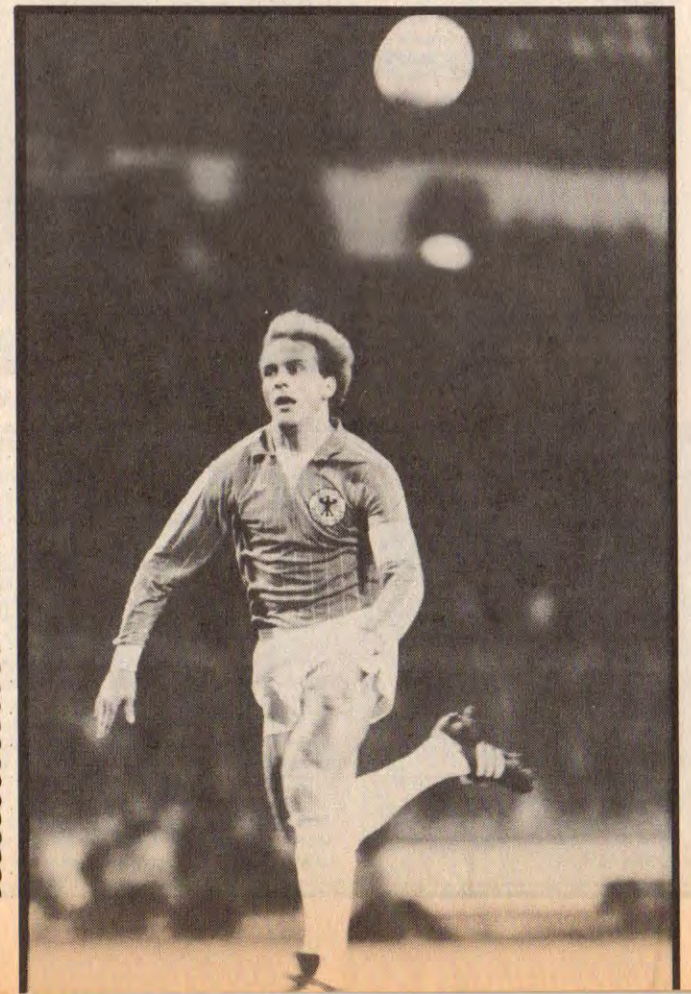
The discoveries of the season are midfielders Thomas Hassler (Koln) and Andy Moller (Borussia Dortmund), plus possibly Bayern's striker Jurgen Wegmann.

The latter is said to have the greatest instinct for goals. No wonder that in Munich the legendary Gerd Muller is his best friend.

Top scorer in the league is Thomas Allofs (Koln), the younger brother of the famous international Klaus Allofs, with 12 goals.

Criens (Borussia Monchengladbach), Leifeld (Bochum) and Neubarth (Bremen) follow on nine goals; among the next five on eight each are the Bayern stars Wegmann and Roland Wohfarth.

West German veteran Karl-Heinz Rummenigge who is leading scorer in Switzerland for Servette.



SWITZERLAND . . . by ARTHUR ROTMIL

SWISS FA officals were taken aback by the demands of their international players — for qualifying for the World Cup finals, the squad members are asking £47,600 each!

And that is without the cut from sponsorship which the FA has arranged. When one considers that Holland, for example, paid their players — victorious in the European Championships — roughly £40,000 a man for all European Championship matches, plus the complete finals' round including the title, one can only shake one's head at such cheek.

The Swiss stars originally demanded £400 just for turning up for a qualifying tie, a 50 per cent cut from sponsorship and £2 from every match ticket sold at home matches.

There are other matters of financial importance yet to be agreed with the league's executive committee and the FA.

In some media, the footballers are being called "greedy", while the allegedly typical Swiss attitude is underlined — asking for money first before producing performances to match.

Switzerland, incidentally, are putting forward their candidature to stage the 1998 World Cup.

The heads of the FA have already formulated an application to FIFA to organise the coveted finals for the second time after 1954.

The Swiss have until the end of 1990 to make a formal request and until the middle of 1991 to present a detailed dossier. The decision will be taken in 1994.

Next to the Swiss, the French have also announced their intention to organise the World Cup finals for the second time (previously in 1938).

But since the French staged the European Championship finals only five years ago, the Swiss reckon they have a better chance.

Or course, the Swiss face gigantic problems. They will need at least six stadia with a capacity of 25,000-30,000; two bigger grounds accommodating 50,000, all seated; plus, naturally, facilities for television and other media, as well as strict security arrangements.

OLYMPIC STADIUM — HUGE BUT EMPTY!

GREECE . . . from LOU ECONOMOPOULOS

FEARS of violence between hooligans of both sides at the Greece versus England friendly international in Athens on February 8 remained just that . . . fears.

The few fist fights that broke out were hardly enough to mention.

The basic reason for the lack of violence was that only 3,500 fans showed up for the contest in the huge — but empty — Athens Olympic Stadium.

Violence at league matches, however, continues unabated and is turning more and more ugly.

After handing Greece an early 1-0 lead from the penalty spot, England stormed back to win 2-1, much to the delight of the 500 British fans present.

It was the second consecutive 1-2 home defeat for the Greeks, having gone down by the same score to Portugal two weeks before.

"Greece created problems for us because they moved the ball quickly between defence and attack," said England manager Bobby Robson afterwards.

"After that surprise goal in the first minute, we controlled the tempo of the match and created more opportunities."

The Greeks, officially still without a team chief, have been coached for their last three matches by Alekos Sofianidis, one of the squad's trainers.

"England is a school of soccer. Here in Greece, every team has its own style of play. How can you find a common style?" asked Sofianidis after his side's defeat.

"England are perhaps not the team they used to be. But they still have some excellent talent.

"We may have lost but I am reasonably satisfied with the performance."

Meanwhile, on the league front, PAOK were victorious over visiting Olympiakos by a solitary goal on February 12. The result left Olympiakos level with AEK at the top on 26 points.

AEK lost for the first time at home, going down 1-0 to Aris.

PAOK are in third place with 24 points followed by Panathinaikos and Iraklis on 23 and OFI on 22.

Police had to use tear gas to halt violence between PAOK and Olympiakos supporters in Salonica. The authorities reported at least 40 injuries and 17 arrests.

The violence kept alive a streak which began at the start of the season — at least one game per week since has suffered an outbreak of crowd trouble.

Most of the incidents involve Olympiakos fans, who have seen their team play four times this season on neutral pitches because of punishment by the Greek Soccer Federation (EPO).

Things were pretty rough on the pitch, too, as the referee called 25 fouls against PAOK and 22 against Olympiakos.

AEK president Stratos Gidopoulos was furous with his players after the defeat at home and told them he would fine them up to a million drachmas each for the defeat!

"After this defeat, I am afraid for the future," remarked AEK's Yugoslav coach Dusan Baijevic.

As if two lists were not enough, a third list of soccer players who had received money from the illegal account of banker-publisher and Olympiakos owner George Koskotas was sent to the investigating committee looking into the huge scandal.

The parliamentary committee has requested that Koskotas' brother Stavros, who fled to West Germany, testify.

Stavros was vice-president of Olympiakos and helped bring Hungarian star Lajos Detari to the club.

The committee wants to find out if Koskotas's Bank of Crete took out a loan from American Express to pay off the eight million drachmas for Detari's purchase and if that money is among the huge accounts missing from the Bank, as reported by the local press.

Meanwhile, there are rumours that Detari is fed-up with playing for Olympiakos, whose fans have made it known that they feel he is not playing well for the club. He has been booed at recent matches.

Terry Butcher causes problems for the Greek defence.

CHERNOMORE WIN INDOORS

BULGARIA . . . by BOB VAUGHAN

BULGARIA'S mid-term break has seen an indoor tournament, further discussion over the number of points to be awarded for a win, departures abroad and disagreement over the timetable for the second-half of the season.

The newspaper 'Trud' and the Grand Hotel in Varna joined forces to organise the fourth indoor competition on the coast.

Vitosha, Slava and Lok from Sofia, Chernomore, Trakia, Plovdiv and the 'local' Spartak were the contestants and their squads contained several former stars — 'Old Glories', as they are termed in Italy.

The hall in Varna accommodated a pitch some 75 yards by 40 but with full-size goals, another indoor innovation.

The 'Vets' in each team showed what they could still do and there was plenty of competitive spirit among them, so much so that the yellow and red cards were rather too much in evidence.

Winners were Chernomore with a narrow 3-2 Final victory over Vitosha.

Meanwhile, about the only thing agreed for the spring half of the season was the date of resumption, which was due to be on February 26.

There was no unanimity over the details of the fixtures and discussions were held barely a month before the restart.

On the Bulgarian Football Union's agenda is the question of points awarded.

To the background of the worrying problem of the enormous difference in standards between the First and Second Divisions, both full-time and de facto professional, and the Second and the amateur Third Division, the magazine Sport has launched a controversy on how many points winners of games should take.

Division Three has experimented with three for a win. Should this apply higher up too? Perhaps it will next season.

Bulgarians abroad have started well. Iskrenov made a successful debut in Zaragoza while much the same could be said of Guetov, also on the Iberian Peninsula at Portimonese.

Portimonese have been sufficiently satisfied with Guetov to take on Simenov from Sliven. And there are rumours that a third Bulgarian may sign for the Portuguese club as well, with Vratza's international winger Voinov the likely candidate.

LAZAREK IS UNDER FIRE FROM PRESS

POLAND . . . by BOB VAUGHAN

A LOOK at Poland's international record for 1988 makes reasonable reading for national coach Wojciech Lazarek as he prepares for the early summer World Cup qualifying group matches in Stockholm and London.

Lazarek's spy Jacek Gmoch was in Athens to run the rule over England and will no doubt be in Wales, too, to see the Swedish friendly.

In the past 12 months, Poland have suffered only two defeats, both against European Championship contenders in the Soviet Union and the Republic of Ireland.

Two draws were complemented by five victories, the most important of which was the 1-0 home win over Albania.

Lazarek was less satisfied with this performance and remarked that his team just does not seem able to do so well against highly defensive opposition.

Despite the two valuable points, Lazarek said that 'Klub Polska' had played far better in the Cottbus friendly with East Germany.

The Polish press feels that the time for experimentation is over and Lazarek is again under fire for using so many players.

In 1987, he tried no less than 44 — for 1988, it was 33 but Przeglad Sportowy still says this is far too many.

The paper feels the best that can be drawn from last year is the results but the way the national team performs is unsatisfactory and the display in the home World Cup tie with Albania was a "headless chicken" one.

The press are most critical of Lazarek's reluctance to build on a regular basis. Only two of the 33 players selected in 1988 played in all 12 internationals.

On the other hand, 14 players only appeared twice!

Continuity was not, therefore, the name of the game but Lazarek claims that with so many players performing inconsistently, he has no choice than to keep on experimenting.

After the Albania match, Lazarek told the press it could write what it liked. He was trying to work in peace and harmony.

Shades of another group two manager perhaps?

Poland's hope, however, probably will have to be entrusted to the younger generation and Lazarek is looking to Krzysztof Warzycha (Ruch), Robert Warzycha (Gornik Zabrze), Wieszczycki (LKS), Cyzion (Pogon), Lukasik (Lech) and Ziober (LKS).

SPERR DEBUT?

AUSTRIA . . . by ARTHUR ROTMIL

ALEX SPERR, the first Austrian ever to play in the English football league, is poised to make his debut — if he can get a work permit — with Aston Villa having signed a three-year contract.

The 20-year-old, six foot four inch defender from Voest Linz has played 16 times for Austria's Under-21 side and three times in the Olympic team.

He had been negotiating with FK Austria but chose England, not least because no Austrian club would pay the £272,000 fee which Linz will pocket from Aston Villa if the deal goes through.

Sperr is hopeful of being granted official permission to play in England, though he is not a full international and from a country outside the EEC.

Since the past decade has seen the rules in England bent, notably for several Yugoslavs and Poles, non-EEC nationals and some uncapped players, he cannot see any reason why he should be denied the chance to become a professional in England.

Austrian football is now preparing to resume the league programme following the usual lengthy winter break.

Leaders FC Tirol sighed with relief when the OFB (FA) announced that former West German international Hansi Muller, 31, who was sent off against Rapid Vienna, had been banned for three matches. It is only a suspended sentence!

That means that the fiery midfielder is allowed to carry on playing and if he is not sent off in the next six months, then the threat of punishment will be lifted.

Tirol boasted by far and away the best attendance in the First Division. Their eleven home games were watched by a total of 105,000 spectators — a rise of 25 per cent compared to last year.

Contrary to the rules in operation until last season, the clubs will take with them half the points total accumulated in the first phase.

During the winter break, team managers worked hard on improving the players' stamina.

This is a sore point with Austrian footballers who, according to a survey, only have enough strength for half a match!

WENGER ADM

ENGLISH GAM

THE thing about 38-year-old Arsene Wenger, manager of the present Champions and European Cup contestants Monaco, is that he is a deep admirer of the English game.

Even though, twice in two seasons, his team have been to White Hart Lane and torn Tottenham to shreds.

It was 3-1 this time, but you have to take into account first that Monaco were without Glenn Hoddle, not only chief schemer but chief scorer this season as well, and that they hadn't played a competitive match for a month.

By the last 20 minutes, Wenger admitted afterwards, his players were rather tired. But by then, they and the explosive little Ivory Coast winger Fofana had taken Spurs to the cleaners with three goals going in within five minutes.

Hoddle, alas, had been obliged to stay at home, or at least in Monaco, with a nasty knee injury, picked up in a so-called friendly match against the Second Division team, Mulhouse.

So Wenger, a shrewd strategist, packed his midfield, using the energetic veteran Ferratge, a player he much admires, Dib, Poullain and co. Though to be quite precise, one remembers Monaco teams with five men, including an advanced Glenn Hoddle, operating with success in the early season.

Thumb

Asked at Tottenham what chance he thought Monaco had of keeping the title, Wenger opened his thumb and forefinger about an inch. Just that much, he said; and a lot would depend on injuries.

Note that the attcking full-back Amoros, one of the team's most exciting and gifted international players, was not among those present.

When asked what he thought of the fact that Hoddle, voted the best foreign player in France, could not even get into the England squad, the Monaco manager, who filched Hoddle under the nose of the ex-Paris SG manager, Houllier, was diplomatic.

Just like Bobby Robson, he answered that if you wanted to use Hoddle you had to build a team around him, and to reinforce the defence.

Meanwhile, he was plainly, if privately, praying that Hoddle's knee injury would not be too severe.

And Michael Platini was planning to bring his international team to Highbury, under the shadow of the coming and vital game against Scotland.

Hard indeed though to see France catching Yugoslavia.

The Monaco victory, which was distinguished by a vast technical superiority of the French champions over Spurs, and an evident ability to compete at the physical level, again made you wonder why it is fashionable to decry French football as an easier option.

Critics in England, you may recall, censured Hoddle for allegedly ducking the harder realms of football in Italy or in Spain. Without any evidence that he had offers from either.

Gifted

His Monaco team-mate and great admirer Mark Hateley will surely tell you that it is indeed an easier life for a centre forward in France than in Italy, where defences are so immensely well organised and defenders so quick and gifted. Which doesn't mean French football is a push over.

On the other hand, when Graham Rix's Caen team, which had showed such great improvement after its poor start, came to Third Division Gillingham the week after Monaco had thrashed Spurs, they went down to a heavy 3-0 defeat.

So I suppose you could notionally make capital out of that result, too. Caen, after all, though they collapsed against Monaco at home early this season, have been a great deal more combative since then.

Klaus Allofs is back, when his footballing career seemed doomed, and his club, Olympique Marseille, have become vastly more competitive in consequence and edged Paris Saint-Germain from the top of the table.

It has taken great persistence and determination to get that injured knee back into shape. Visits to Zurich or an artroscopy, and to Munich, where he worked so hard to build it up again.

An infection set in which complicated and delayed his recovery. But now, as he has shown on the field, all is well.

He knows that Marseille signed him essentially to score goals, but he likes, he says, to drop a little deeper and to play a more creative role.

At the winter break, he felt he was back to his old form. Others felt he had surpassed it.

In the present Marseilles set-up,

ADMIRES GAME

FRANCE . . . by ANDRE DUCLOS

says Allofs, Jean Pierre Papin is the "real" centre-forward, enabling himself and the other French international striker, Cantona, still serving out that year's suspension from the international team for criticising Michel, to permute.

It is true, Allofs admits, that the presence of three such natural strikers can mean problems when the team plays at home, with the three of them virtually treading on one another's toes in the opposing goalmouth.

Tactics

Allofs also admits that far too often in these home games, Marseille had squeezed through by the odd goal. But, he said, the team had worked out new tactics for the second half of the season.

The ever controversial Georges Peyroche is back as a manager since mid-October, in charge now of Second Division Valenciennes and trying to bring about a revival.

He points out that in the short time he has been in the driver's seat, the "fiasco" of unsuccessful signings has been left behind, a new side has been built with no fewer than five players under the age of 20.

Morale

The results have greatly improved; the team is now well away from the relegation area. There was, when he arrived, he says, a problem of injuries and a problem of morale. But above all, the players who had been bought were not producing the goods.

Unfortunately, says Peyroche, "certain attitudes" had become imbued in the players. His policy was to give preference to those who really wanted to play for Valenciennes.

If he had been manager at the start of the season, he emphasises, he would never have gone into the transfer market and spent the money which Valenciennes could not afford. There should be better times ahead.

Good news for Gabriel Calderon, the Paris Saint Germain left winger. He is on Carlos Bilardo's short list for the Argentine team to contest the South America Cup next July, and for the squad to compete in the 1990 World Cup eliminators. All on merit, too.

JEAN-PIERRE PAPIN. . . new tactics at Marseille.

DYNAMO KIEV GO OUT ON THEIR OWN

SOVIET UNION . . . by BOB VAUGHAN

DYNAMO KIEV officially became a professional club on January 3 and the only one controlling its own financial fate entirely.

Dnepr has the same status but is still linked with an industrial concern which acts as sponsor and guarantor of the finances.

Dynamo's move to full-time professionalism was a nice 50th birthday present for Valeri Lobanovsky and the crowning of a 15-year campaign by the 'Big Chief', who claims he is a soccer manager and no politician!

Dynamo Tbilisi are planning to assume a similar status. Further moves in this direction by other top clubs can be expected, though it seemed odd that a number were not represented at the meeting to discuss the blueprint for the new Football Union body.

Spartak's dismissal of Konstantin Beskov was followed by many a famous name putting up to take over, among them Igor Nette, Oleg Romantsev, Yevgeny Lutchev, Alexander Kochepkov and Juri Morozov, the assistant to Lobanovsky.

While the Spartak team left for an indoor tournament in Switzerland, matters were in the hands of a provisional technical committee headed by the patriach of Soviet soccer, 86-year-old Nicolai Starostin.

The booting-out of Beskov by Spartak had, however, not gone un-noticed by the Federation and its presidium made very critical noises at the way the club had behaved.

Spartak had not run its affairs within the club properly and given sufficient regard to national football interests.

Spurs

Beskov decided not to go to law, even if the terms of his leaving prove unsatisfactory.

The next news was the appointment of former Spartak defender Romantsev, 35, who gained his coaching spurs at Erasnaya Presnia in Moscow and Spartak Orkonikidze.

He is a former pupil of Beskov and will doubtless continue the tradition at Spartak of attacking football.

In indoor tournaments abroad, both Spartak and Dynamo Kiev did their stuff.

The Moscow team took the Lucerne Trophy with a final round win over Velez Mostar and Dasayev's successor Cherchesov was declared best goalkeeper.

In Stuttgart, 'Loba's Lads' were most impressive, seeing off Partisan Belgrade in the semi-final and hosts VfB in the Final.

The training camp at Ruit seems to have given the Ukrainians the necessary freshness for the spring half of the season.

Travelling considerably further were Ararat Erevan. Montevideo was the distant venue for a friendly with World Club champions Nacional and 1-1 was a more than respectable result.

SLEEP FOR JENEI

RUMANIA

ONE manager who can sleep content in his bed at present is Rumanian 'team chef' Emerich Jenei.

With four points from two group one World Cup qualifiers and a goal difference of 6-1, an away match in Athens is the next test for the Rumanians.

And with Greek football in the doldrums, Jenei's men could well be on the road to Italy before Rumania's toughest tie in Copenhagen in October.

That is followed by the last group one game, the return with the Danes in Bucharest.

Everything seems well set and when asked for his comment on the two wins to date, Jenei replied that he had expected them.

He is in the fortunate position of being able to build on club sides having a successful time in the European Cups and there is excellent co-operation with the league managers.

It helps that Steaua, Dinamo and Victoria have played consistently well this season, both in the championship and the European Cups.

They also play in the same style as the national team and it is no fluke the country has a representative in all three quarter-finals.

The playing of club formations en bloc means everyone knows their job, they are used to knowing who is beside them, be it for club or country, and players are continually playing the same roles.

Hagi is an example. He knows he has to make the play whether he is performing for Rumania or Steaua.

It also helps Jenei to have his squad, almost without exception, based in Bucharest, though he says it is no guarantee of success.

Jenei's staff have gradually built up morale, stamina and strength to match the best in Europe and without wishing to denegrate the opposition, he is certain Rumania will be taking part in Italia '90 unless there is any major change of personnel.

Jenei does not intend to change his winning formula, a guarantee in itself of continuing success.

NAPOLI TREBLE

ITALY . . . by KEIR RADNEDGE

NAPOLI are well in the hunt for the treble. Diego Maradona, Careca and Co face Juventus in the quarter-finals of the UEFA Cup; are on the brink of an Italian cup final against Sampdoria; and are comfortably tucked in behind leaders Internazionale in the league.

The only fly in the ointment is the state of relations between Maradona and coach Ottavio Bianchi.

Maradona has no time for Bianchi's rules and regulations and the coach, while respecting Maradona's enormous talent, has no time for the Argentine's personality cult.

Given their respective positions and responsibilities to themselves and the club there is no prospect of a real thaw in relations.

But president Corrado Ferlaino has recently fined both men — Bianchi £5,000 and Maradona £3,500 — in an effort to at least stop them conducting their little feud through the columns of the newspapers.

One of Bianchi's major complaints is the way Maradona, whenever he is injured, bypasses the club's medical services and consults his medical guru, Ruben Oliva.

Dr Oliva has a successful track record with the Argentine national team but Bianchi distrusts his influence. The trio came into conflict recently over Maradona's back strain and whether he should play through it, or rest.

There did not seem much wrong with the way Maradona scored two goals in a 4-1 win over bottom club Ascoli or the way he collected goal No 2 in the 2-0 away win over Pisa in the first leg of the cup semi-finals.

The problem with Napoli is that just when everyone seems to be getting back to concentrating on football some other controversy rears its head.

The latest is a series of match-fixing allegations concerning a game against Roma last season and centring on Bruno Giordano and Moreno Ferrario, two of the men sold off last summer for their roles in the attempted player power revolt aimed at getting rid of Bianchi.

In contrast to Napoli, Inter carry on smoothly at the top of the table.

Of course they had to lose some time but even then there was plenty of honour in a 4-3 defeat away to Fiorentina in the 17th round of the season, the halfway stage.

Inter had previously conceded just five goals in 16 league games but proved no match this time for the youthful and skilful powers of the new midfield discovery, Roberto Baggio, and forward Stefan Borgonovo, on-loan from Milan.

Lothar Matthaus shot Inter ahead from a 14th-minute penalty after referee Luigi Agnolin penalised the Florence defence for flattening Aldo Serena.

Baggio equalised after 33 minutes, converting a pass from the Brazilian, Dunga, and then Roberto Cucchi shot Fiorentina in front seven minutes into the second half.

The lead was short-lived, Serena claiming his 10th and 11th goals of the season to restore Inter's lead.

The way Giovanni Trapattoni has organised Inter's defence few would have fancied Fiorentina to break back.

But in the last 18 minutes Borgonovo turned on the individual brilliance twice to beat Walter Zenga in magnificent style.

Inter remained one point ahead of Napoli, however, and Trapattoni was comparatively unworried.

He said: "I don't think Napoli will overtake us. We are playing football which is both entertaining and effective. The proof is that eight or nine times this time the opposing fans have stood to applaud us from the pitch.

"We had a lapse of concentration against Fiorentina but that was one match in 17. I think we will probably look back later and see that maybe this defeat did us a favour."

Sampdoria continue to look the only outsiders capable of upsetting Inter or Napoli. But for all the fine form of Gianluca Vialli and Roberto Mancini they proved unable to upset Napoli when they had their best chance, on home ground on Genoa.

Even though Napoli were without back strain victim Maradona Sampdoria had to settle for a goalless draw.

As for Roma, internal morale is at such a low ebb that veteran goalkeeper Franco Tancredi has asked to be dropped and Brazilian striker Renato says he wants to be released from his contract at the end of the season and go home.

A 3-1 home defeat by Pescara, for whom Brazil's Tita scored a hat-trick, was the final nail in the coffin of veteran coach Nils Liedholm.

Forty-eight hours later he was pushed sideways into a consultant's role and youth coach Luciano Spinosi took over as first team caretaker.

Another unhappy foreigner is Portugal's Rui Barros at Juventus.

He began the season brightly but now looks more and more a fish out of water.

The problem for coach Dino Zoff is that both Michael Laudrup and Alexander Zavarov are either injured or battle-weary so Barros must play — to little effect.

Juventus were disappointing in a 2-0 defeat at Verona which was then followed by a goalless draw at home to Como.

Champions Milan are showing late signs of progress. Coach Arrigo Sacchi dropped Dutchman Frank Rijkaard for the visit to Fiorentina and was rewarded by a goal from his replacement, Angelo Colombo, and a 2-0 victory.

One black note: World and European Footballer of the Year Marco Van Basten was sent off four minutes from time.

● VAN BASTEN. . . sent off in Florence

★★★ INTERNAZIONALE have appealed against a record fine of £100,000 imposed by UEFA for a string of crowd, team and administrative offences committed during the UEFA Cup third round tie against Bayern Munich. Inter were also involved indirectly in hooligan trouble after their 1-1 draw away to Atalanta. One of the eight fans arrested after a knifing incident turned out to have been employed in liaison work between Inter and their fan clubs.

OSASUNA STADIUM SHUT

SPAIN . . . by KEIR RADNEDGE

OSASUNA of Pamplona have had their El Sadar stadium shut for three games by the Spanish federation because of the missile-hurling which forced the abandonment of their league match against unbeaten leaders and champions Real Madrid.

Real keeper Paco Buyo, not the most popular of players after television exposure of his cynical tactics in the stormy game against Atletico Madrid, was the target for a hail of coins and cans. With Osasuna leading 1-0 the game was abandoned two minutes before half-time.

Pamplona has never been a happy destination for Madrid, partly owing to the complication of local security and politics which ensures the police maintaining the lowest of low profiles. Elements associated with the Basque separatist group, ETA, were blamed for the trouble. Veteran Madrid midfielder Ricardo Gallego infuriated the Osasuna players by telling skipper Jose Ripodas: "You are as much terrorists as they are."

The Osasuna squad then threatened to withdraw from the Spanish players' union and were placated only when Gallego's midfield colleague, Michel, resigned as vice-president of the union.

The disciplinary decisions caused their own controversy, particularly in Barcelona.

Coach Johan Cruyff said: "Madrid will always cause problems like this, wherever they play."

And England's Gary Lineker suggested that to abandon the game two minutes before half-time was a panic measure. He said: "They should have let the game run until the interval and then the teams would have changed ends and probably the trouble would have been over."

The prospect of Madrid turning the result around when the remaining 47 minutes of the game are played off at Zaragoza on March 8 was a further upsetting prospect for Barcelona, who are a point behind Madrid.

Barsa vice-president Joan Gaspart said: "In the sporting sense I hate Real Madrid and want them to lose every game."

That really went down well a week before Gaspart was due to head up the Spanish delegation going to Belfast for the World Cup qualifier against Northern Ireland.

It was rumoured that the Madrid contingent might pull out of the squad in protest. But, in the end, of course, everyone travelled together in harmony and collected another excellent result.

The 2-0 win confirmed Spain as front-runners to qualify for Italy next year and did much to mend fences — at least at player-to-player level.

Atletico Madrid president Jesus Gil was one voice notable for his silence.

But then Gil and his players had embarked upon a month of media abstinence following the farcical attempt to sign West German star Jurgen Klinsmann.

Earlier this season, soon after the start of Ron Atkinson's brief tenure, Gil announced that a pre-contract had been signed with the Stuttgart forward.

Klinsmann was angry that Atletico had leaked news of their discussions and promptly announced that they would be the last club in the world he would now consider joining.

In his original talks, however, Gil had agreed that Stuttgart would come to Madrid to face Atletico in a friendly at the end of January.

He then took the opportunity to set up a further meeting with Klinsmann. Only Klinsmann did not turn up.

Gil tried in vain to deny having been rebuffed. He said: "I didn't set up this meeting. I've no interest in this player any more.

"It was his agent, the Yugoslav Perovanovic, who said a few days before the match that we ought to get together because, despite reports to the contrary, he had not yet signed for Inter of Italy.

"I understood that he, Klinsmann, wanted to talk to me."

The meeting had been set up for the evening after the match, a 1-1 draw in which Klinsmann had a low-key game and was whistled and jeered by Atletico's fans.

Gil said: "I understand that Klinsmann now does not want a meeting because he says the fans were rude to him.

"You know, I don't think he is right in the head. We had an agreement with him — I have the documents to prove it — yet he tries to deny it.

"And he has had the nerve to accuse us of leaking the business when he was the one who let it slip out to push up his value and get a better offer from the Italians.

"Klinsmann used Atletico, not the other way round. I don't want to waste my time on spoiled children.

"I understand, too, that his team-mates are fed up with him and can't wait for him to go. Well, he can go somewhere else. We don't want him here."

Gil had other problems, too. The club was assessed for sequestration of assets — right down to the chairs and the cups in the trophy room — over a refusal to pay a £260,000 social security debt.

Then Gil himself had to hand over some property in Marbella to settle a financial tangle.

At least he did find time in all that to sort out the club's administration as far as the federation were concerned, by handing the contracts of star players such as Paulo Futre and Co to Atletico.

Previously they had been held by one of Gil's own companies — which, for obvious reasons, was contrary to the federation's regulations.

Elsewhere Elche beat Valladolid 1-0 for their first win under new coach Ladislao Kubala, but remain bottom of the table.

One place above them are Espanol, last season's UEFA Cup runners-up, who surprisingly snatched a point in the Catalan derby by holding Barcelona 2-2.

Malaga dismissed coach Luis Costa after a 3-1 home defeat by Murcia and Logrones sacked Javier Irureta because after a 2-0 defeat away to Atletico.

Argentine-born Carlos Aimor has taken over while second division Pontevedra have appointed an old favourite, Jose Hector Rial, as coach.

Sporting in crisis yet again

PORTUGAL . . . by KEIR RADNEDGE

SPORTING Lisbon are clearly condemned to endure yet another season of crisis and controversy. It is now seven years since the 'other' Lisbon giant won anything, when they collected the league and cup double under Malcolm Allison.

Allison, you may recall, was dismissed before the start of the following campaign because of incidents on a pre-season tour and since then Sporting have gone through six more coaches. Latest appointment — and sacking — was that of Pedro Rocha.

The Uruguayan was one of South America's outstanding forwards in the 1960s with Penarol and Sao Paulo FC but his fame was probably restricted because he never played in Europe.

After injury forced a premature retirement he turned to coaching, still in Brazil, before moving to Europe for the first time last summer with Sporting.

A tough challenge this, despite the injection of more cash and new players from new president Jorge Goncalves.

When results go badly any president protects his own back by blaming — and sacking — the coach. That was the fate of Rocha after a 1-0 defeat by Vitoria Setubal pushed Sporting back into fourth place in the table, ten points behind leaders and neighbours Benfica.

Vitor Damas, the veteran goalkeeper who retired a few weeks earlier, was placed in caretaker charge.

Goncalves may have found some consolation in the affair which deflected attention from his remarkable pronouncements a week or so earlier on the rotten state of Portuguese football.

Goncalves has taken pains to deny rumours that Sporting are in financial trouble. He says: "We were in the red when I took office so the first thing I did was to sell Frank Rijkaard to Milan.

"That raised £2million, most of which went to pay off the club's creditors. The rest was used to buy new players, as I had promised in my election campaign.

"After that all we could was sit back and wait for the necessary results which would help turn the financial situation around through increased interest, television, sponsorship, and so on.

"I must admit it was a setback to go out of the UEFA Cup to Real Sociedad in only the second round. We had also been counting on a good run in Europe.

"But there is no question of the club being insolvent.

"We have millions invested in our grounds alone and now that we have the necessary permission to build a hotel and a commercial centre the land will prove even more valuable."

But while finance and administration may take up much of Goncalves's thoughts, the fans were growing ever more impatient with the team itself.

Goncalves admits: "With a new coach and new players it was never going to be an easy championship for us. People who expected big victories at every home game put more pressure on the team.

"I would say that our home games are more difficult than our away games because of this."

And then Goncalves came out with the real bombshell, saying: "I had expected better results and so had the fans. They must have been amazed by some of the points we dropped.

"But you must take account of problems peculiar to Portuguese football. I must be honest and say that frequently Sporting play against teams doped up to the eyeballs, the proof of which will, I am sure, be confirmed by the Director-General of Sport's office.

"Obviously, I am not saying that the points difference between Benfica and ourselves is all down to drug abuse. But I have no doubt that many of the opponents we have faced here in the Alvalade have used stimulants."

All these accusations were not, however, enough to save Rocha. Nor did his departure have any remedial effect on the team.

Sporting lost their next match 1-0 (at home!) to Amadora and slipped back to fifth in the table, now 12 points adrift of Benfica at the top.

After a sticky patch at the start of the year the Red Eagles resumed their smooth progress with a 2-0 win away to struggling Farense, who are now managed by Malcolm Allison.

They did leave it late to claim both points. Brazilian centre-back Ricardo Raimundo opened the scoring in the 83rd minute with Angolan striker Vata Garcia scoring the second three minutes later.

FIGHTING SPIRIT IN MANY FORMS

ENGLAND . . . by DERICK ALLSOP

ENGLISH football has always been known for its fighting spirit.

Where we lack subtlety, we compensate with aggression, determination and other such virtues.

These past weeks, that spirit has fired way beyond the bounds of acceptability. Honourable virtues have given way to loutish behaviour, even thuggery.

We have had Nottingham Forest manager Brian Clough, probably the biggest name in our game, striking supporters of his team; we have had Wimbledon, the fairytale club, writing another chapter of what has become a horror story; and we have had some of our tabloids putting the boot into Bobby Robson after England won away to Greece in a friendly international.

We have also, it should be said, had a healthy diet of league football action during this remarkably mild winter spell.

Arsenal have consolidated their position at the top of the First Division, Manchester United have maintained their revival and Steve Bull has continued to score loads-a-goals for Third Division leaders Wolves .

The antics of Mr Clough, Wimbledon FC and certain members of Her Majesty's Press can scarcely be bracketed with instances of normality.

Clough, creator of fine and usually disciplined sides, decided to take the law into his own hands when Forest supporters ran onto the City Ground pitch to celebrate the 5-2 Littlewoods Cup quarter-final defeat of Queen's Park Rangers.

By aiming punches at young fans as they were being ushered away from the playing area by police, he reached too far. His extraordinary loss of control was captured by television cameras and resulted in an FA charge of bringing the game into disrepute.

Perhaps more extraordinary was the support he received from his club, the police, the public and even a couple of his victims.

Forest chairman Maurice Roworth said: "I'd have done exactly the same as Brian in similar circumstances.

"I back his actions 100 per cent, and so do nine out of every ten among the hundreds of telephone callers we've had.

"Brian reacted in the heat of the moment. I don't think I would have been responsible for my actions either if I'd been near the pitch.

"Perhaps I'm a hard-liner when it comes to law and order, but hooligans deserve a clip round the ear. They should have got it long ago.

"It won't do them any harm. I was clipped round the ear plenty of times as a kid and I probably deserved it."

To most observers the excited young fans in question hardly appeared to be hooligans. There was no hint of violence and the police were calmly clearing the pitch anyway.

Clough, in fact, admitted he had gone too far. He was fined £5,000 and banned from his familiar touchline position from February 23 until the end of the season.

The ban, however, applies only to league grounds. If Forest reach the final of one or more of the three knockout competitions in which they are involved — namely the FA Cup, the Littlewoods Cup and the Simod Cup — he will not be denied his place of honour at Wembley.

Many felt Clough had got off lightly, but the FA Commission said they had taken into account his admission of guilt, his support and his commendable track record.

FA chief executive Graham Kelly said: "I regard it as appropriate punishment, bearing in mind Mr Clough's previous record, the standards of discipline he expects from his players and the regret he expressed."

Clough accepted the punishment by saying: "The FA have done me proud. Certain sections of the media wanted me hung. I was wrong and the FA took what action they had to make.

"I am sorry. I let them down and that's something I've never done before in my life. I fully support the police. They are the last hope in our society."

Wimbledon's players just might find their match in the autocratic Clough. Bobby Gould is clearly finding them a handful.

The club that came from non-League football to FA Cup success in 11 years now make more headlines for their violent behaviour.

No sooner had the dust settled on John Fashanu's 'tunnel incident' with Manchester United's Viv Anderson, than Eric Young and Vinny Jones were sent off on consecutive Saturdays.

Young was dismissed in the FA Cup tie at Aston Villa but it was the incident involving Jones that brought another avalanche of condemnation tumbling down on the London club.

Jones was ordered off for the fourth time in his career, and the second this season, for head-butting Everton captain Kevin Ratcliffe in the league match at Goodison Park.

Wimbledon's owner, Sam Hammam, earned little sympathy when he said: "Vinny is a marked man and we are proud of him. He is part of the Wimbledon family."

Manager Gould's immediate reaction suggested a different line.

He had already banned Jones following a dismissal in a friendly on the Isle of Wight and said: "This incident has destroyed me but I am responsible for the club and I work to get things right.

"We are very disappointed to have had a player sent off for the second successive Saturday and this has put us back a long way after the hard work we've put in.

"We can only hit them in one place — their pocket. And they will be hit."

Over the course of the following few days it became clear that Wimbledon had closed ranks. The other players claimed Ratcliffe had over-reacted and that he hadn't been butted at all.

Gould duly fined Jones — probably a week's wages of about £750 — yet took no further disciplinary action. The Wimbledon boss even scuffled with a television crew who wanted to interview the player at the club's training ground.

Media attention that week was also on England, and in particular on manager Robson.

The head-hunters followed him to Athens, where his team met Greece in a game arranged as preparation for the World Cup qualifier in Albania.

England went behind to an early penalty and the excecutioners sharpened their axes.

John Barnes' free-kick produced an equaliser and captain Bryan Robson's splendid volley eleven minutes from the end secured a 2- 1 victory.

The executioners were no doubt a trifle miffed but remained faithful to their cause and claimed Robson had again failed. One headline screamed for him to go.

In a near empty stadium, on a poor pitch, England came from behind to beat the Greeks. It was by no means an inspired performance, but it was certainly no disaster.

Robson is right when he says there are no pushovers in modern international football. It is also true to say that we do not have the most sublime talents in the world game.

What matters to England — and to Robson — is the match in Tirana. Would a 2-1 win there be a disaster? I think not.

SCOTS GO FOR FOREIGNERS

SCOTLAND . . . by GLEN GIBBONS

THE increasing cosmopolitanism of Scottish football seems to become more evident almost every time one of the leading clubs makes a move to strengthen the playing squad.

Aberdeen, who already have goalkeeper Theo Snelders on their books, went back into the Dutch market to buy giant striker Willem van der Ark — he is 6ft 5in — from the Willem II club for £300,000.

Celtic's Billy McNeill began negotiations with Sheffield Wednesday with a view to buying Icelandic midfielder Siggi Jonsson and Rangers' Graeme Souness flew to Italy to talk to officials of Dynamo Kiev about the prospects of taking a Russian player or two — including Vasily Rats — back to Ibrox.

Celtic were so close to concluding a deal with Wednesday that McNeill believed Jonsson would be in his team for the match against Motherwell on February 11.

But that very week, Hillsborough manager Peter Eustace was sacked.

Now his replacement, Ron Atkinson, needs time to assess what he has and what he will need before he can make a decision one way or the other.

But it is known that Jonsson's contract expires at the end of the season and that he is determined not to re-sign for Wednesday.

Souness does not expect anything imminently from his reconnaissance mission to Italy, where Kiev were preparing for the re-opening of the season in the Soviet Union.

The Iron Curtain countries are notoriously difficult in the matter of communication.

Most Rangers and Celtic fans will hope that they will be successful in their attempts at more importation.

Rangers' policy of buying abroad (including England) took them to the championship in Souness's first season and has made them very short-priced favourites to do so again this time.

Celtic, of course, brought in a mixture of English and Irish internationals to support the home Scots last season and swept to a league and cup double in their centenary year.

STEVE BRUCE of Manchester United (right) stamps out a Bournemouth raid in the teams' 1-1 FA Cup fifth round draw at Dean Court. The one upset was Brentford's victory at Blackburn. But Liverpool, Nottingham Forest, Everton and Cup-holders Wimbledon all progressed to the quarter-finals at the first attempt.

Robson said: "After you've been hit over the head like we have been in the last six months, it was a relief to get a win. I'm glad 1988 is over and that we started in 1989 with a victory.

"This will restore some confidence and belief, and is just what we needed before Albania."

Managers have been feeling the strain at club level too. Ron Atkinson, who led Manchester United to two FA Cup wins, lifted Atletico Madrid from 18th place to third in the Spanish League.

But while he was back in England to complete the sale of his house, he received a telephone call from his assistant and long- time friend Colin Addison which served to inform him he'd been sacked.

Atkinson said: "Colin told me he'd been offered my job."

Atletico's larger-than-life president Jesus Gil claimed the equally Big Ron hadn't taken his job seriously enough.

"There are some coaches who sign a contract and then act as though they've won the lottery," said Gil.

So, after three months in the Spanish capital, Atkinson was back on the market, consoled, it's true, with a little more holiday money.

And he wasn't out of a job for long either, First Division strugglers Sheffield Wednesday moving swiftly to appoint Atkinson in succession to Peter Eustace.

Alan Ball's sacking as manager of Second Division Portsmouth was perhaps less surprising. Six defeats in seven matches meant the end for the last of England's 1966 World Cup winners in charge of a club side.

Terry Yorath, manager of Wales, caused a stir when he changed day jobs. He returned from Swansea City to Bradford City following the dismissal at Valley Parade of Terry Dolan.

Angry Swansea, armed with an injunction, frustrated Yorath and Bradford for a week, but failed in the High Court to gain an extension of the order.

Meanwhile, back on the football field, Arsenal maintained their three-point lead in the First Division by coming from behind to win 2-1 at Millwall. Norwich stayed in touch with a 1-0 home victory against Derby.

Manchester United made it six league and Cup wins in a row with a 2-0 defeat of Sheffield Wednesday at Hillsborough. Brian McClair scored the goals that lifted the side into third place, though 11 points behind Arsenal.

Wednesday are third from bottom, above Newcastle and West Ham. Next come Charlton and Trevor Francis' Queen's Park Rangers. Francis has been busy buying players in an attempt to strengthen his side. He signed Nigel Spackman from Liverpool, Andy Gray from Aston Villa and, most interestingly, Peter Reid from Everton.

Villa, also going through a difficult period, bought Ian Ormondroyd, the lanky Bradford striker, and winger Nigel Callaghan from Derby.

Chelsea and Manchester City have dug in at the top of the Second division, while another hat-trick by Steve Bull helped Wolves to a 5-2 defeat of Fulham and a 13-point lead in the Third. Crewe head the Fourth.

West Ham's misery was compounded by a 3-0 defeat at home to Luton in the first leg of their Littlewoods Cup semi-final, with Nottingham Forest surprisingly held to a 1-1 home draw by Third Division Bristol City.

EIRE . . . by SEAN CREEDON

NO WINGERS — NARROW THE GROUND!

EMFA, from the Opel League of Ireland First Division, have narrowed their home ground Buckley Park — because they don't have any wingers!

EMFA manager John Rhatigan admits that the playing surface has been narrowed from 86 to 79 yards.

"But considering that the minimum width for a pitch is 50 yards, we have hardly committed a crime," he said.

The club was formed in 1966 when a group of local youths became hooked on soccer after watching the World Cup Final on television.

But EMFA is considered too parochial a name and next season, the club plan to change to Kilkenny City.

Norwich City midfielder Andy Townsend is the latest English-born player to successfully trace his Irish roots.

Townsend made his debut in the recent friendly against France at Dalymount Park and will probably be in Jack Charlton's squad for the World Cup game against Hungary this month.

Townsend is the 39th British-born player to declare for the Republic under FIFA's ancestral rule and also the 39th player to be used by Charlton in his 26 games in charge of the Republic.

Thousands of Irish fans are expected to travel to Budapest. They will all be hoping for a win, something the Irish have failed to do in seven meetings with the Magyars.

Two of the travel companies competing for business are well-known in football circles.

Former Irish international Ray Treacy has been in the travel business since he quit playing and his company now specialise in football trips.

Well-known radio and television commentator Jimmy Magee has only recently entered the business.

His company — Journeys of Distinction — are arranging a special deal which will also take in the World Indoor Athletics Championships in the Hungarian capital on the weekend prior to the game.

Derry City, the club who look most likely to dethrone Dundalk as Opel League of Ireland Premier Division champions, could be losing their French-born full-back Pascal Vaudequin.

Pascal is due to return home for national service on May 1 but his upcoming marriage to a Derry girl could save him from a spell in the army.

The biggest shock in the first round of the FAI Harp Lager Cup was the defeat of Premier Division side St Patrick's Athletic by First Division Home Farm.

The amateurs pulled off the giant-killing act on the Saints' notorious sloping pitch at Inchimore.

Two other First Division clubs knocked out their Premier Division opponents. Drogheda and Bray eliminated relegation-threatened Galway and Waterford respectively.

D-DAY IN BUDAPEST

WITH Spain virtually certain of a World Cup qualifying place, and Northern Ireland almost definitely eliminated, it's now down to a battle between the Republic of Ireland and Hungary to secure the second qualifying place from Group Six, writes MICK DUNNE.

And that should add up to an interesting occasion when the two meet in Budapest on March 8.

Having dropped an away point against Malta, the Hungarians will be under a considerable amount of pressure to win, a factor which could work in Ireland's favour.

On a recent rainy Dublin evening, the Republic were held to a 0-0 draw, and created few chances in a friendly against a well organised France under Michel Platini.

The occasion marked a first cap — all 90 minutes — for Norwich City's Andy Townsend, the latest recruit to the Eire camp.

It also saw the first appearance of Liam Brady in an Irish shirt since late 1987, while Le Havre based Frank Stapleton led the Irish attack for the first time since the European Finals.

For the Budapest tie, the Irish manager Jack Charlton is unlikely to have Townsend in the first team, and will probably give Tony Galvin the left-wing berth after his splendid performance in Seville, where some of his first-half runs and crosses were among the few highlights (from an Irish viewpoint) of that 0-2 defeat by Spain.

Ireland's excellent defence, led by Mick McCarthy (only six goals conceded in the last 17 internationals), will be severely tested, in what will be the first competitive game for the Hungarians since new manager Bertalan Bicskei took over.

from PAUL GARDNER in New York

WHICH BOOT IS ON WHAT FOOT FOR US SOCCER STAR PEREZ?

THE surprising — one might almost say amazing — news from New York is that the USA have won a bronze medal at an official FIFA mens tournament.

And, like so much else on the American soccer scene, that is not quite what it seems.

The tournament in question was the first-ever FIFA five-a-side world championship, staged in January in the Netherlands. A strange affair, indeed — with FIFA trying out a newly-developed set of rules that are an attempt to pull together all the various forms of indoor football.

That alone seems an unlikely aim. Is it really likely that the South Americans — Brazil in particular — who have been playing their own version, with its small heavy ball, for generations and for which there is already a recognized world body, will happily go along with that?

The Brazilians call it futebol de salao, and a skilful, satisfying game it is.

The new FIFA version is only a distant cousin, and it seems highly unlikely that it will ever replace the Brazilian version in Brazil.

Much the same can be said of the situation in the USA. Yet another indoor game has been invented here, one that not only bears little resemblance to the FIFA version, but also manages to bear only a passing resemblance to the outdoor game.

It is played in the Major Indoor Soccer League (MISL) and features sideboards and several other peculiarities filched from ice hockey.

But the MISL is the only progessional league that the USA has in football — if this is football — and most of the best American players have played in it at one time or another.

So, the idea of an American national indoor team doing well is not all that fanciful.

Except that the team that went to Holland contained players who had no experience of the MISL — one of them, Peter Vermes, turned himself into one of the tournament's stars.

To further confuse any attempts to assess the real meaning of the USA's third place finish, there is this to consider: the tournament did not feature any of the world's great players.

Most of the countries represented sent teams based on seasoned indoor players. Presumably on the basis that they — though thoroughly obscure players — would know more about the secrets of indoor soccer then the big stars.

And once again, the USA does not fit the pattern.

For the US team was drawn almost entirely from its outdoor national team roster. In other words, these were the best US players.

In which case, perhaps one ought to be asking why they didn't do better?

Impossible

It seems rather a harsh approach for a country which (apart from the very first World Cup in 1930) has never managed to even get into the second round of a FIFA tournament — but it is one that was brought up by the US coach, John Kowalski.

He was clearly miffed that his team did not take the gold: "If we were to play the tournament over again in a month's time, I'd expect to win the whole thing."

While it remains virtually impossible to say with any certainty exactly what the US success means in terms of the outdoor game, there was one exceedingly encouraging aspect.

Kowalski found that the Dutch press, the fans, and even opposing coaches, were full of praise for the US team because they played an exciting brand of attacking soccer.

If that mentality can be reproduced outdoors, then the USA — hitherto known for rather solid, workmanlike defensive performances — will be opening a significant new chapter in its soccer history.

Incidentally, while we're on the subject of unlikely US soccer triumphs, you should know that Bayern Munich turned up in California during the Bundesliga's winter break, and agreed to play a game against the US team that is preparing for this year's University Games.

In other words, seasoned West German pros against raw US college kids. Result: USA 2 Bayern Munich 0.

Preposterous, of course. But, as US coach Jim Lennox put it: "It was clear that Bayern weren't ready for the level of our play."

Evidently, for coach Jupp Heynckes stormed off the field immediately after the game "too fed-up to say anything to anyone" according to Lennox.

Another surprising thing about the US performance was that it was accomplished without the man whom many consider their best player: Hugo Perez, someone who does have plenty of MISL experience.

Perez didn't make the trip because of injury, but will be available for the team when it starts its series of qualifying games for the 1990 World Cup. Or will he be available?

This particular question mark has nothing to do with injuries. This one revolves around the mirky world of sponsorship and marketing.

The US national team has a sponsorship agreement with Adidas, which stipulates that national team players will wear only Adidas equipment when playing or training for the team.

One of those sweeping agreements known in the trade as "head-to-toe" coverage.

It is an agreement which puts Hugo Perez in a Catch-22 situation. For he has a personal contract with another equipment supplier — Puma.

Perez is one of the 18 players who have signed a contract with the United States Soccer Federation, making him virtually a full-time national team player, in return for which the USSF will pay him $28,000 a year.

But Perez's Puma contract is, it seems, worth $50,000. For that sort of money, Puma obviously expect to get some sort of visibility.

And Perez — having forsaken the MISL to sign with the national team — has only one opportunity to be seen in public: during his national team games . . . when he is required to wear Adidas.

Perez — who has a wife and family — says that he cannot live on the USSF's $28,000, and that he needs the Puma money.

Puma's lawyers have been scanning the small print of the USSF's players agreement, and are saying that there is nothing in it that prevents Perez from wearing Puma.

After all that, is goes without saying that Puma's lawyer — no doubt savouring an opportunity to break the stranglehold that Adidas have on the US team — are threatening to take the USSF to court.

ALL THAT GLITTERS IS NOT BRONZE!

THE American Soccer League, which will be starting its second year of play in April, will do so under a new Commissioner.

Chuck Blazer, who filled that position from the league's birth in 1987, has resigned to become president of one of the league's clubs, the Miami Sharks.

Blazer feels that the accomplishments of the league in its first season came pretty much up to expectations: "We'd projected a start with eight teams, and we had 10. And we've retained all 10 for 1989."

Blazer admits there were "inhibiting factors" that held back the ASL's growth. Foremost among them, the voluntarily agreed salary cap of $50,000 for each team.

That figure, described by Blazer as "a guideline", has been increased to $75,000 for the 1989 season — a move that Blazer sees as a measure of the league's confidence in its future, and belief in the long-term plan for steady and stable growth.

But the ASL's apparent wish to function as a training ground for national team players seems ever more precarious.

It did not function well in 1988, when the constant coming and going of national team players did nothing to help ASL clubs establish settled team line-ups.

And the problems seem likely to be worse this year, as the national team has an even more demanding schedule.

This includes eight World Cup qualifying games played within the CONCACAF area, home-and-away ties with Costa Rica, Guatemala, El Salvador and Trinidad & Tobago.

AT last, there has been some action on the World Cup-94 front.

Paul Stiehl, who has been running the World Cup USA 1994 Inc office in Washington since its opening last year, has been abruptly defenestrated. Or should one say, superseded.

Stiehl, who was clearly under the impression that he was the man who was going to head up the US effort, now finds that someone hes been appointed over his head.

That someone is Scott LeTellier, a Los Angeles attorney who established a reputation as an excellent organiser while working for the Los Angeles Olympic Organising Committee.

Speculation

During his work on the soccer tournament of the 1984 Olympic Games, and again during his involvement in the preparation of the USA's World Cup bid, LeTellier established a close working relationship with top FIFA officials, especially general secretary Sepp Blatter.

Indeed, that close association has led to some speculation that LeTellier was welcomed by most soccer leaders as a good one — but the brutal shoving aside of Paul Stiehl has not sat well with some top USSF members.

USSF President Werner Fricker is a rather dour man who will never receive any plaudits for his sense of public relations.

He is — apparently quite unwittingly — establishing a reputation as a insensitive, dictatorial leader. It is a style that seems destined to cause a great deal of friction within the United States Soccer Federation.

The ultimate measure of anyone's style is, naturally, whether or not it is successful.

Fricker can point back to solid achievements during his four years in office. He has rescued the USSF from a huge debt, and he has brought the World Cup to the USA.

But alongside that is a growing list of bungled staff appointments. The removal of Paul Stiehl is only the latest in an ongoing catalogue of hirings and firings, which can only suggest that Fricker's touch when it comes to selecting the right man for the job is anything but certain.

The irony is that unrest over this is coming to a climax at the moment when Fricker has made what is seen as his best appointment yet — always assuming that it is his, and not FIFA's, move.

The scene is not helped by Fricker's ineptitude when it comes to public relations.

Take the case of TBS, the Turner Broadcasting System, which has paid some $7 million for the rights to televise the games from the 1990 World Cup in Italy.

It is not every day that a major television company shows any interest at all in soccer, never mind backing it up with a cheque for $7 million.

To celebrate this gala occasion, a press conference was to be held at New York's Waldorf Hotel. It never happened because, incredibly, TBS could not get Werner Fricker to answer their phone calls!

Recently, Fricker has retreated even further into unavailability by refusing to talk over the phone with journalists, and demanding that all questions be submitted in writing.

Oh yes, said the USSf press officer, he will reply to them.

A New York journalist who took him at his word and submitted a list of questions was still waiting for the answer three weeks later.

THE Major Indoor Soccer League continues its extraordinarily adventureful season.

The latest of the league's seven clubs to display signs of incipient doom are the Dallas Sidekicks (reportedly going bankrupt, but hoping to finish the season), and the Tacoma Stars, whose coach Alan Hinton has been encouragingly quoted as saying: "We haven't run out of money yet."

TAHUICHI — the youth club from Santa Cruz, Bolivia — has, in the ten years of its existence become world famous as a team that plays entertaining, fast-paced, attacking skillful football. It has travelled all over the world, has won titles in South and North America and Europe.

This past summer, Tahuichi were off on their travel again. To Sweden, to play in the Gothic Cup . . . which they won, undefeated.

Then on to Russia, at the invitation of the Russian FA, for games in Moscow against Lokomotiv and Torpedo . . . both won. On the way home, a stop in Cuba for two more games . . . both won.

And so back to Santa Cruz — and to a nasty shock. This time the club's triumphs were not appreciated. Instead, Tahuichi were accused of being communists, for having played in the USSR and Cuba. Local businessmen withdrew financial support.

The press and the people were on Tahuici's side. Support gathered from outside Bolivia — the president of the South American Football Federation (CONMEROL) wrote to the Bolivian federation asking them to support Tahuici. Pele wrote to express solidarity with the club.

Now it seems Tahuichi will survive — and maybe prove the point this month at the Dallas Cup.

IFK GOTHENBURG

● Continued from page 5

IFK's youth section. Appropriately for a defender he is, off the pitch, an insurance clerk.

Lars ZETTERLUND. Midfield. Aged 25 with eight Olympic and 17 under-21 appearances for Sweden. Zetterlund was born in Hornsand and originally made his mark with AIK Stockholm. His brilliant form for AIK in the 1986 championship play-offs (against IFK!) persuaded them to sign him for what turmned out to be a bargain £80,000. Tireless worker with a dangerous shot from any range.

Klas INGESSON. Midfield. Aged 21 with four appearances for Sweden's under-21 side to his credit. Ingesson, a forestry worker, began pulling up trees for junior club Odeshogs IK, moved to IFK's youth section, and was promoted last season to the first-team squad.

Mikael NILSSON. Midfield. Aged 21, a trainee teacher who has played four times for Sweden at both youth and under-21 level. Nilsson moved from IFK Falkoping to IFK's youth section three years ago and earned promotion to the senior squad last year.

Magnus JOHANSSON. Midfield. Aged 25 with seven Olympic appearances, four under-21 selections and 10 youth caps to his name. Born Alingas, near Gothenburg and a member of a football dynasty since his father played for IFK in the 1950s. Young Magnus first came to headline attention with his display for IFK in a 4-0 UEFA Cup win over Gent of Belgium in the autumn of 1986.

Ulf JOHANSSON. Midfield. Aged 22 and one of the very few IFK players never to have appeared for Sweden at any level. Johansson is a salesman who began with minor division neighbours Goteborg FF, moved to IFK at the tender age of 14 and has just been promoted to the first-team squad.

Tommy HOLMGREN. Midfield or left wing. Aged 30 with 27 caps for Sweden as well as nine under-21 and 18 youth appearances. A promising ice hockey player as a youngster. Arrived at IFK with elder brother Tord in 1977 from Gsllivare in the third division. Relies almost exclusively on his left foot and is one of Sweden's most unpredictable players. Good with his head and a free kick specialist but sadly injury-prone. Dribbling skills have earned him comparison with the 1950s' star Lennart Skoglund. Nils Liedholm, Swedish coach to Italian club Milan, recommended him to Cremonese, then just promoted to the first division, in 1984. But when IFK set a £400,000 price tag on his head they backed off. Just the man for a crisis since he is, off the pitch, a fireman.

Leif FORSBERG. Forward. Aged 26 with seven Olympic internationals behind him. Forsberg is a trainee teacher who joined IFK at the start of last year from first division rivals GIF Sundsvall.

Peter ERIKSSON. Forward. Aged 20. Carpet-fitter who has just been promoted to the first-team squad from IFK's youth ranks. Joined the club originally from Skepplamds BTK in 1984.

Lennart NILSSON. Attack. Aged 30 with six senior caps for Sweden. He has also played five times at Olympic level, 10 times for the under-21s and in 14 youth internationls. Nilsson cost more than £100,000 from Elfsborg in the winter of 1986-87 when he was bought to replace Italian-bound Johnny Ekstrtm. Nilsson's pace was the key factor in a 4-1 win over FC Tirol of Austria a few months later which took IFK into the UEFA Cup Final. Before he joined IFK he had been tempted by a number of foreign clubs including, four years ago, Olympiakos of Greece. Later admitted, however, that he had become "a 30 per cent better player for having joined Gothenburg."

Kennet ANDERSSON. Forward. Aged 22 with three under-21 and 11 youth internationals on his record. Andersson is a computer programmer who has just joined IFK from EFK Eskilstuna.

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ID CARD SCHEME TO START IN HOLLAND?

OBITUARY

TED SMITH, who has died in Lisbon, aged 74, was one of the great names from the history of Benfica. He was team manager in the early post-war years and guided Benfica to their brilliant 1950 double of league championship and Latin Cup. With his wife and daughter he settled in Lisbon after retiring and died in the city's English Hospital after a long illness.

WLODZIMIERZ MAZUR, who died in Poland in December aged 34, had been a member of the World Cup squad in 1978. Mazur played 282 league matches (scoring 79 goals) between 1973 and 1983 for his home-town club, Zaglebie Sosnowiecz. Later he joined the club's coaching staff. Mazur played 21 times for Poland.

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 18

ACTION: Albania draw 1-1 with Greece in a rare friendly in Tirana . . . in Sao Paulo, in the Veterans World Cup, Argentina beat Britain 4-2 thanks to two goals from the Argentine-born Israeli international, Daniel Brailowsky.

BELGIUM: The Belgian state prosecutor, summing up in the Heysel trial, demands between three and four years' jail for each of 15 Liverpool fans on trial for manslaughter following the 1985 crowd disaster. Prosecutor Pierre Erauw also asks for the acquittal of two of the defendants and acknowledges that the cases against eight others has not been proved. Erauw warns Judge Pierre Verlynden not to be misled by the fans' demeanour in court. He says: "They would have you believe they were taking a walk on the terraces for the good of their health. Some wanted to pass themselves off as boys at their first communion. Yet these same people were responsible for the odious and violent scenes in the stadium. If the English supporters had not been there, that terrible drama and tragedy would not have occurred." Erauw makes no suggestion of punishment, if guilty verdicts are passed, on former Belgian FA secretary Albert Roosens and two police officers who all face lesser charges of unlawful killing through reckless behaviour with regard to stadium security.

ITALY: Napoli president Corrado Ferlaino says that Brazil striker Careca is to extend his contract a further two years, keeping him in Naples until 1991. Ferlaino, 20 years Napoli president, says that he hopes Diego Maradona will stay with club "as long as he is an active player." . . . more than 40 riot police are summoned to Roma's training ground at Trigoria to disperse 300 fans who turn up to jeer and insult the players in the wake of the weekend's derby defeat by Lazio . . . the federation's disciplinary commission hands out a string of suspensions following on-pitch violence the previous Sunday. Banned are Rui Barros (Juventus), Dunga (Fiorentina), Scoro (Torino) and Berti (Inter).

SPAIN: Osasuna's Republic of Ireland striker Michael Robinson, once English football's most expensive teenager, is forced to retire because of a knee injury . . . Atletico Madrid's latest team manager, Colin Addison, denies that he played any role in the dismissal of Ron Atkinson. Addison says: "I backed Ron 100 per cent all the way. I know people will put two and two together and make five but what has happened is just very unfortunate. I have spoken to Ron since all this took place and there is no animosity between us.

SWITZERLAND: Saint-Gall agree terms to sign Chile international Patricio Mardones from Universidad Catolica of Santiago for £85,000. Mardones agrees to fly to Switzerland on February 6, two days after his hastily-arranged wedding.

THURSDAY, JANUARY 19

ACTION: In the Veterans World Cup Brazil are held 1-1 by Italy and Uruguay beat West Germany 1-0. The Brazil v Italy game is refereed by Englishman Jack Taylor.

ENGLAND: Nottingham Forest manager Brian Clough apologises to the fans at whom he hit out during a pitch invasion at the end of the League/Littlewoods Cup-tie against Queen's Park Rangers. Clough says: "It was a regrettable incident. However misguided, my action was taken with the right motives. I was concerned about a possible confrontation between our supporters and theirs." Argentine veteran Osvaldo Ardiles undergoes a leg operation after being injured in the same match (not, of course, by Clough).

IRAN: Japan beat Iran's under-23 team 1-0 in the first fully-fledged representative match to be staged in Teheran since before FIFA's war zone suspension on matches there. The venue is the snow-covered Martyr Shirodi stadium.

ITALY: The most famous bad back in the country forces Diego Maradona to pull out of the weekend's forthcoming visit to fellow title-chasers Sampdoria. Maradona says: "I'm sorry about this, both for myself and my team-mates but I cannot train and it would be silly to try to play. I need a rest."

SWITZERLAND: FIFA announces in Zurich that FIFUSA, the Brazilian-based rival indoor federation, is to join FIFA. FIFUSA has 40 member countries. In return for 'coming quietly,' it is believed FIFUSA officials may be rewarded with senior positions in FIFA's indoor soccer administration.

YUGOSLAVIA: Miodrag Belodedici, the Steaua Bucharest star sweeper seeking asylum in Yugoslavia, says he has signed a provisional contract with Red Star Belgrade. Club secretary Vladimir Cvetkovic says: "As far as we know the situation is under control. He wants to play for us and we think his presence would be good for our team. We do not know how long we must wait for a decision from the Rumanian authorities but we are prepared to wait." A Rumanian official, in Bucharest, says only: "Belodedici travelled on a tourist visa which is still valid and Steaua are awaiting his return."

FRIDAY, JANUARY 20

ACTION: In the World Cup qualifiers the United Arab Emirates beat Pakistan 5-0, Qatar beat 1986 finalists Iraq 1-0, Jordan beat Oman 2-0 and Libya pull out of a home tie against Algeria at the last minute. The Libyans first blame the proximity of the host stadium to the controversial chemical plant which has caused an international furore — then they blame the "political fraud" which prevents Libya and Algeria being one united nation . . . in the long-awaited first senior international in more than eight years, Iran draw 2-2 with Japan in front of a 65,000 crowd in Teheran.

CHILE: FIFA appoint Uruguayan Eduardo Rocca Couture to act as mediator in the dispute which has brought Chilean football to a standstill as the Big Five clubs try to oust FA president Miguel Nasur.

ITALY: The Government begins consideration of a £1.8billion programme to improve transport, hotels and communications in time for the 1990 World Cup finals. The grant does not include cash for stadia redevelopment, which has to be approved separately.

PORTUGAL: Atletico Madrid star Paulo Futre is included in Portugal's squad for the international against Greece, despite uncertainty over whether crisis-hit Atletico will be willing to release him for a friendly.

SPAIN: Barcelona vice-president Juan Gaspart says that Dutch star Ronald Koeman is expected to sign a pre-contract with the Catalan club at the weekend. Though Real Madrid are now out of the running there is speculation about a late bid from Milan. But Koeman's agent, Ger Lagendijk says the Barcelona transfer is "all but sealed."

SATURDAY, JANUARY 21

ENGLAND: Soviet newcomer Sergei Baltacha, playing in midfield, scores a debut goal for his new club, Ipswich, in their 5-1 victory over Stoke in a second division game.

ITALY: Ruben Oliva, Diego Maradona's Svengali-like personal doctor, says the Argentine star may be fit, after all, to face Sampdoria.

LIBYA: Libya apologise to FIFA for cancelling the World Cup tie against Algeria at short notice. Now the Libyans say they took their action for fear that American warplanes would launch an attack on the controversial chemicals plant during the match.

SUNDAY, JANUARY 22

ACTION: Spain maintain their 100 per cent record in the World Cup qualifiers as they beat Malta 2-0 in Valletta despite the 73rd-minute expulsion of Real Madrid defender Manuel Sanchis. In other ties Liberia and Kenya draw 0-0, Tunisia beat Morocco 2-1, Zambia beat Zaire 4-2, Cameroon beat Gabon 3-1 and Angola are held 2-2 at home in Luanda by Nigeria . . . in the Veterans World Cup Britain beat West Germany 2-1 while Brazil beat Argentina 3-0.

GREECE: Olympiakos beat Apollon 2-0 to maintain their goal difference lead over AEK Athens at the top of the table. Hadjidis and Funes score the goals. AEK beat Panionios 2-0 with goals from Pittas and Okonski.

HOLLAND: Champions PSV stay clear at the top thanks to a 3-1 away win over MVV Maastricht — despite the absences of five key players, including injured Hans Van Breukelen and suspended (and transfer-bound) Ronald Koeman.

IRAN: The touring Japanese go down to their first defeat of their tour. An Iran provincial team beat Japan 3-1 in Ahvaz, Khuzestan.

ITALY: Inter beat Lazio 1-0 to stay top, while Milan add to the pressure on Nils Liedholm by beating his erratic Roma side 3-1 in the Olympic stadium. Napoli eventually have to make do without Maradona away to Sampdoria and the match ends in a goalless draw.

PORTUGAL: No change at the top — Benfica, Porto and Sporting all win to remain first, second and third in the table. Mats Magnusson and Antonio Pacheco score Benfica's goals in their 2-1 victory away to Vitoria Guimaraes.

SPAIN: With the Spanish national team in World Cup action, domestic clubs involve themselves in prestige friendlies. Second division Algeciras lose 5-0 to Borussia Moenchengladbach while Atletico Madrid and Stuttgart draw 1-1 . . . Ronald Koeman formally signs and seals a four-year contract with Barcelona. The fee for PSV Eindhoven is £4million with the player receiving £700,000-a-year . . . already there is speculation that Colin Addison may be replaced in due course as Atletico Madrid coach by Vicente Cantatore, the Argentine-born Chilean who is currently in charge at Valladolid.

URUGUAY: Penarol qualify for the South American club cup when a 5-0 thrashing of Huracan Buceo places them top of the liguilla which traditionally follows the league campaign. Defensor and champions Danubio must play off for the other cup place.

YUGOSLAVIA: Asylum-seeking Miodrag Belodedici says he will wait out the statutory one-year ban if necessary before he can play for Red Star Belgrade. He says: "If I must wait then I must wait. I was expecting a much longer suspension. I am not prepared to say why I left Rumania. All I can say is that I am Serbian and I want to play for a Serbian team."

MONDAY, JANUARY 23

BELGIUM: Defence summing-up speeches begin in the Heysel trial.

WEST GERMANY: Sports and environment officials launch a campaign against the hooters commonly used by fans because of both noise pollution and the chlorofluorocarbons which damage the ozone layer.

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 25

ACTION: Greece lose 2-1 at home to Portugal in a friendly which attracts fewer than 1,000 fans . . . in the Veterans World Cup Brazil beat West Germany 2-0 with goals from Claudio Adao and Nunes. The tournament has now switched from the Caninde stadium in Sao Paulo to Santos' Vila Belmiro.

ITALY: Sampdoria, Napoli, Atalanta and Pisa all qualify for the semi-finals of the Italian cup. Napoli really are without Maradona this time and squeeze through 4-3 on aggregate against Ascoli after losing the return leg 3-1. Pisa need the away goals rule to beat Verona after winning 1-0 at home for a 2-2 aggregate.

THURSDAY, JANUARY 26

ACTION: In the Veterans World Cup Uruguay beat Britain 2-1 thanks to two goals in two minutes midway through the second half from Gonzalez and Cabrera. Argentina beat Italy 1-0.

FRANCE: Strasbourg say they expect to sign Simon Stainrod, the former Aston Villa, Stoke and Queen's Park Rangers striker.

PARAGUAY: Sol de America qualify for the South American club cup after beating Pettirossi in a qualifying play-off. Sol, who won their home leg 5-0, hold their rivals 1-1 away. They now join Paraguayan champions Olimpia in a cup first-round group which matches them against Chile's Cobreloa and Colo-Colo.

WEST GERMANY: Cologne is apparently confirmed as venue for the Champions' Cup quarter-final second leg between Galatasaray of Turkey and Monaco. Galatasaray are under UEFA orders to steer clear of Istanbul because of crowd trouble at the second round match against Neuchatel of Switzerland.

FRIDAY, JANUARY 27

ACTION: In the World Cup qualifiers Iraq beat Oman 3-0, Jordan and Qatar draw 1-1 in Amman — despite hold-ups for two pitch invasions by angry fans — and Kuwait beat Pakistan 2-0.

AUSTRIA: Alex Sperr, under-21 full back from Austria Linz, is expected to join Aston Villa for £275,000. Villa manager Graham Taylor says: "I am willing to take the gamble because he has shown us on trial that he has a lot of promise. Also I would have to pay that sort of money for someone from our fourth division these days."

EAST GERMANY: New manager Manfred Zapf rings the changes in his squad for a February tour of central America. Rainer Ernst and Ralf Minge are among the casualties but there is a recall for the Lokomotiv Leipzig goalkeeper/captain Rene Muller. New DFV general secretary Wolfgang Spitzner provokes speculation about far-reaching changes when he says that a package of changes will also concern training methods and the transfer system.

FRANCE: Caen welcome Brian Stein back from injury — even though he plays against them for his old club, Luton, in a 4-1 English victory at Kenilworth Road in his own testimonial game.

HOLLAND: The KNVB promises that, within a few weeks, its own identity card scheme for fans will be in operation. The scheme will force five clubs — including PSV, Ajax and Feyenoord — to limit away match tickets only to fans holding the ID card. A KNVB spokesman denies wilful delay in implementing the scheme.

ITALY: The Italian Cabinet delivers the final stamp of approval on the £1.8billion funding package for World Cup infrastructure.

SWITZERLAND: UEFA slap a record fine of £93,000 on Italy's Internazionale of Milan for incidents surrounding the UEFA Cup third round second leg against Bayern Munich. Inter are fined £62,000 for their fans' fireworks, £10,000 for their players' misconduct and £21,000 for showing excerpts of the match on a closed-circuit display screen. The previous record fine of £60,000 was also levied on Inter in March, 1985. That was also because of events at a UEFA Cup tie against West German opposition — in that case, Koln.

YUGOSLAVIA: The Foreign Ministry formally approves the asylum plea presented by the Rumanian footballer Miodrag Belodedici.

SATURDAY, JANUARY 28

ACTION: Spain beat Norway 3-1 in an under-19 match in Palma de Mallorca . . . in the King's Cup in Bangkok, Thailand open the action by defeating Malaysia 1-0. In a later match South Korea beat Indonesia 2-0.

ARGENTINA: Boca Juniors move further ahead at the top of the table. They beat Deportivo Arminia 2-1 away while long-time leaders Racing go down 2-0 to San Lorenzo.

BRAZIL: New national boss Sebastiao Lazaroni creates a stir by naming the line-up he wants to start the summer's first World Cup qualifier. It is: Taffarel — Jorginho, Julio Cesar, Ricardo, Mazinho — Dunga, Geovani, Tita, Valdo — Renato and Careca.

SPAIN: Osasuna's home league match against Real Madrid is abandoned by the referee after 44 minutes because of a rain of missiles on Madrid players and, in particular, goalkeeper Buyo. Osasuna lead 1-0 at the time the game is halted.

SWITZERLAND: UEFA's disciplinary machinery comes up with assorted fines on Real Sociedad, Napoli and Hearts. Player suspensions are imposed on Sisic (Velez), De Napoli (Napoli), Thouvenel and Roche (Bordeaux).

SUNDAY, JANUARY 29

ACTION: In the King's Cup in Bangkok the Soviet Union beat North Korea 2-0 and China beat Thailand B 1-0 . . . in the Veterans World Cup West Germany beat Argentina 5-1. 'Name' players include West Germany's Wolfgang Kleff, Paul Breitner, Hans Lohr, Rainer Bonhof, Bernd Forster and Bernd Holzenbein as well as Argentina's Carlos Squeo, Miguel Angel Brindisi and Oscar Mas. Italy and Britain draw 0-0 in the day's other match . . . Zimbabwe lose 2-1 at home in Harare to the Danish club, Brondby, in match to raise money for refugees from the guerrilla conflict in Mozambique.

BELGIUM: All-square at the top. Both Mechelen and Anderlecht win 4-0 away — Mechelen defeating RWDM and Anderlecht beating Racing Mechelen. The mainstream Mechelen lead Anderlecht by one point with Brugge a further six points adrift in third place.

BRAZIL: The national championship resumes after the holiday, with Vasco surprisingly losing 1-0 to Fluminense because of a Ze do Carmo own goal.

GREECE: AEK go back into sole leadership of the first division thanks to a 1-0 away victory over Kalamaria while Olympiakos are held goalless at home by Iraklis. AEK's hero is goalkeeper Spiros Economopulos, who saves a Kardos penalty three minutes from time.

HOLLAND: PSV remain three points ahead of Ajax by defeating fifth-placed Feyenoord 1-0. Romario scores the winner with three minutes remaining against a Feyenoord team reduced to ten men a few minutes earlier after the expulsion of Barendse for tripping Gerets. In hooligan clashes police make 37 arrests before, during and after the game.

ITALY: Inter are held 1-1 by Atalanta so Napoli, 4-1 winners at home to Ascoli, move up into second place, three points behind. Careca and Maradona share the Napoli goals.

PORTUGAL: Benfica beat Portimonense 3-0 and edge a further point away from Porto, who are held goalless at home by Vitoria Guimaraes. Sporting lose 2-1 away to Chaves and slip to fourth. Farense's newly-appointed coach, Englishman Malcolm Allison, sees his team held 0-0 by Maritimo.

SPAIN: Barcelona fail to take advantage of Real Madrid's abandoned match. They are held 2-2 in the Catalan derby by relegation-threatened neighbours Espanol. Brazilian centre-forward Baltazar scores his 19th goal of the season in Atletico Madrid's 2-0 defeat of Logrones.

WORLD SOCCER DIARY

MONDAY, JANUARY 30

ACTION: South Korea beat Switzerland 2-0 in the King's Cup, in Bangkok, while Thailand beat Indonesia 3-0 . . . in the last match of the qualifying stage of the Veterans World Cup, Brazil beat Uruguay 2-0 with both goals coming from Claudio Adao.

FRANCE: Eric Cantona, Marseille's enfant terrible, is suspended indefinitely by Marseille after squabbling with the crowd and hurling his shirt at the referee in a weekend charity match to raise money for the Armenia earthquake disaster fund.

TUESDAY, JANUARY 31

ACTION: Defending cup-holders Denmark draw 0-0 with the Soviet Union at the King's Cup in Bangkok. North Korea beat Thailand B 2-0.

FRANCE: National manager Michel Platini springs a surprise by including veteran defender Patrick Battiston in his squad for the forthcoming matches against the Irish Republic and against Arsenal. Battiston has been persuaded back into the French squad after retiring from international football following the 1986 World Cup . . . Marseille defender Karlheinz Forster says he will soon meet West Germany manager Franz Beckenbauer to discuss ending his self-imposed retirement from the national team.

SPAIN: The Spanish federation shut Osasuna's El Sadar stadium for three matches as punishment for the incidents which forced the league match against Real Madrid to be abandoned at the weekend. Osasuna are also fined £1,000 and ordered to find a new venue to play out the remaining 46 minutes of the abandoned match against Madrid . . . two new caps, goalkeeper Jose Biurrun of Bilbao, and defender Fernando Hierro of Valladolid, are named in Spain's World Cup squad to face Northern Ireland. Biurrun replaces injured Ablanedo while Hierro replaces suspended Manuel Sanchis. There are recalls for Chendo and Baquero in place of Quique Sanchez and Beguiristain.

SWITZERLAND: FIFA awards a 2-0 disciplinary victory to Algeria, whose World Cup qualifier against Libya had been called off at short notice by the Libyans. Police are reported to have fired shots into the air to control a 70,000 crowd which was in the stadium at the time the match was called off.

YUGOSLAVIA: The proposed transfer of Rad Belgrade

● *Continued overleaf*

WORLD SOCCER'S GLOBAL NEWS SERVICE CONDUCTED BY KEIR RADNEDGE

LIMASSOL STADIUM CLOSED BY FIFA

● *Continued from previous page*

defender Milos Drizic to Southampton is held up while the English FA check out his international claims.

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 1

ACTION: Mechelen beat PSV Eindhoven decisively by 3-0 in the first leg of the Supercup, in Belgium . . . in the King's Cup in Bangkok, South Korea beat Malaysia 3-0 and Indonesia beat Switzerland 4-1.

FRANCE: Eric Cantona is reported to be in Spain trying to find a new club after his stormy conduct in the earthquake relief fund-raiser.

ITALY: World Cup tickets go on sale in Italy and two Swiss fans, who had camped all night outside a Milan branch of the Banca Nazionale di Lavoro are the first to buy. More than 21,000 books of tickets are sold nationwide on this first day.

SWITZERLAND: France formally lodge with FIFA their application to stage the 1998 World Cup. Other candidates are Switzerland, Brazil, Morocco and Japan.

TURKEY: Tanju Colak of Galatasaray and Turkey is guest of honour at a Monte Carlo reception where he receives the Golden Boot which he secured by finishing as Europe's top league goalscorer last season with 39 goals. At the same reception Milan and Holland's Marco Van Basten receives his two prizes for being voted top player, and finishing as top scorer, at last year's European championship finals.

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 2

ACTION: Brazil beat Uruguay 4-2 in the final of the Pele Cup for Veterans . . . in the real World Cup recovered Iraq thrash Jordan 4-0 and the UAE draw 1-1 with Pakistan.

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 3

ACTION: Kuwait, World Cup finalists in 1982, surprisingly lose 1-0 in the qualifiers to the United Arab Emirates.

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 4

FRANCE: The league resumes after a seven-week winter break and Marseille step up the pressure at the top of the table by winning 2-0 in Paris against struggling Matra Racing.

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 5

ARGENTINA: A passionate crowd of around 40,000 turn out for the 'classic' Buenos Aires derby between Boca Juniors and River Plate. After a goalless draw, league leaders Boca are beaten 4-3 in a penalty shoot-out. They remain one point clear of Independiente at the top of the championship.

ITALY: Hooligan action in Bologna, before the match against Fiorentina. Two Fiorentina fans are injured by fighting on a train before the game and police intervene to halt missile-throwing between rival groups of fans in the stadium both before the game and at half-time. Bologna win the match 1-0. Inter stay top, beating Torino 2-0 to hold a three-point lead over Napoli at the halfway stage in the season. Also Serena scores both goals inside the first 20 minutes. Napoli beat Pisa 1-0 with a 32nd-minute goal from Andrea Carenevale. Marco Van Basten scores both goals as Milan beat Ascoli 2-0

KUWAIT: In the wake of successive poor results in the World Cup qualifiers, Brazilian manager Miguel Perreira is dismissed from the national team set-up. FA president Fahd Al-Sabah says: "Perreira should be held solely responsible for the defeat on Friday by the UAE. I and my fellow board members were displeased over the way he approached the game." Who appointed Perreira? Who maintained him in his job?

PORTUGAL: Benfica stretch their lead to four points. They beat bottom club Viseu 1-0 with a goal from Ricardo, while pursuers Porto are held 1-1 at Portimonense.

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 6

ACTION: Swedish champions Malmo draw 0-0 with China on the opening day of Hong Kong's Chinese New Year tournament . . . another Chinese national side is in action in the King's Cup in Bangkok, beating Denmark 1-0 to reach the semi-finals where they will play Thailand. In the other semi-final the Soviet Union beat Thailand B 3-0 . . . Nacional of Montevideo win the new South American Recopa. They force a goalless draw with Racing in Argentina, having won the first leg 1-0 in Montevideo. Racing are holders of the 1988 South American Supercup.

CYPRUS: National manager Panikos Iacovou admits he is still uncertain whether Greeek-based striker Giorgos Savvides will be released by AEK Athens for Wednesday's World Cup tie against Scotland.

FRANCE: National supremo Michel Platini recalls veteran World Cup defender Patrick Battiston from international retirement for the World Cup warm-up matches against the Irish Republic. But Battiston — with other Monaco colleagues — will be unable to play against Arsenal at Highbury because of the forthcoming pressure of European club commitments.

ITALY: Inter, Bayern Munich and Bordeaux all appeal against a mixture of punishments imposed by UEFA's disciplinary committee.

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 7

ACTION: The Irish Republic and France draw 0-0 in Dublin as Ireland manager Jackie Charlton celebrates his third year in charge . . . in an under-21 match in Patras, Greece beat England 1-0.

KENYA: Seven members of the MBC club of Somali ask for political asylum in Kenya after their game against AFC Leopards in the East and Central African Club championship. They claim that, after their elimination, they will be subject to immediate army service on their return to Mogadishu.

PORTUGAL: Rui Aguas scores a hat-trick as Porto thrash Viseu 5-0. But Benfica remain four points clear of them. Sporting slide further into crisis with a 1-0 defeat by Vitoria Setubal.

SWITZERLAND: National team keeper Joel Corminboeuf will be out for three months as he prepares to undergo a knee ligament operation.

YUGOSLAVIA: Rad Belgrade defender Milos Drizic prepares to return home from England where he had been on trial with Southampton. The Employment Department refuse Drizic a work permit amid confusion at the FA who first oppose and then support Southampton's application. Saints also decide not to go through with the signing of another Slav, Vladimir Capljic.

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 8

ACTION: In the World Cup qualifiers, Spain win 2-0 away to Northern Ireland. In Limassol Scotland sneak a 3-2 win in Cyprus where furious fans try to attack East German referee Kirschen for allowing up to six minutes of stoppage time at the end . . . in a peaceful friendly Greece lose 2-1 at home to England after taking a second-minute lead through a Saravakos penalty. In another friendly Israel draw 3-3 with Wales . . . Mechelen of Belgium lose 1-0 to PSV Eindhoven in the Supercup second leg but take the tie 3-1 on aggregate . . . the Soviet Union beat South Korea 1-0 and Thailand beat China 2-0 in the semi-finals of the King's Cup tournament in Bangkok.

ITALY: Napoli and Sampdoria reach the semi-finals of the Italian cup. Napoli beat Pisa 1-0 (just as they did in the league at the weekend) to take the tie 3-1 on aggregate. Sampdoria beat Atalanta 3-1 thanks to one goal from new super-starlet Gianluca Vialli and two more from Roberto Mancini.

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 9

ACTION: The Chinese New Year tournament in Hong Kong explodes with hooligan violence as Hong Kong lose 3-0 to Malmo. Angry fans hurl coins at the manager Kwok Ka-ming and shout for his resignation. Police break up an angry crowd of around 1,000 fans. Malmo score all their goals in the last 36 minutes, two of them falling to Italy-bound striker Martin Dahlin.

BRAZIL: The national championship first leg ties both end in goalless draws — Bahia and Internacional holding on in their respective visits to Fluminense and Gremio.

ENGLAND: Nottingham Forest manager Brian Clough is fined a record-equalling £5,000 by the FA for bringing the game into disrepute. Clough cuffed spectators swarming around the players' tunnel after the 5-2 defeat of QPR in the Littlewoods Cup.

CYPRUS: Local newspapers are scathing about the performance of East German referee Siegfried Kirschen in the 3-2 defeat by Scotland. The papers quote Cyprus manager Iacovou as saying: "We did not lose this match. It was stolen from us."

ITALY: Milan president Silvio Berlusconi is reported as twice having tried to persuade Johan Cruyff to come to Italy from Barcelona. Berlusconi hopes that the arrival of Cruyff might persuade Marco Van Basten to stay with the club byond the end of his contract in 1990.

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 10

ACTION: Qatar surprisingly qualify for the next stage of the World Cup Asian qualifiers thanks to a 2-2 draw away to Iraq — the 1986 finalists, who are thus eliminated. Qatar are helped along the way by crucial mistakes from Iraqi goalkeeper Ahmed Jassem. Elsewhere the United Arab Emirates beat Pakistan 4-1 to join Qatar in the second round. The UAE pip Kuwait on goal difference . . . Thailand beat the Soviet Union 3-1 in the final of the King's Cup in Bangkok.

ENGLAND: The Football League confirms that nine matches (including seven in the first division) will be postponed on March 4 to aid England's preparations for the World Cup-tie in Albania the following Wednesday.

ITALY: The country's three main trades unions promise there will be no strikes during the World Cup finals next year. The pledge is formally made at a meeting with Tourism and Sports Minister Franco Carraro.

PORTUGAL: Sporting Lisbon sack Uruguayan coach Pedro Rocha and appoint recently-retired goalkeeper Vitor Damas as caretaker.

SPAIN: Eduardo Herrera, president of the Andalucia federation, proposes inviting the British enclave of Gibraltar to enter teams in Spanish domestic competitions.

SWITZERLAND: UEFA reject an appeal by Real Sociedad of Spain against a fine of £4,500 imposed for player misbehaviour in their UEFA Cup tie against Koln of West Germany in December. They are ordered to pay the £2,000 costs of the appeal.

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 11

EAST GERMANY: New Sports Minister Klaus Eichler dismisses speculation that East Germany may soon allow soccer transfers to the west. He says this would sap East Germany's already thinly-spread talent.

FRANCE: Paris Saint-Germain look increasingly fragile leaders as they are held goalless at home by Toulon. Marseille beat Strasbourg 3-1 to move within two points of the Parisien leaders. West German veteran Klaus Allofs scores twice.

SPAIN: Baltazar, Atletico Madrid's Brazilian centre-forward, scores his 20th goal of the season in a 1-1 draw with Bilbao.

SWITZERLAND: UEFA reject Napoli's appeal against a three-match ban on international midfielder Fernando De Napoli, who was sent off in the third round UEFA Cup-tie against Bordeaux.

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 12

ACTION: Swedish champions Malmo win the Chinese New Year tournament in Hong Kong thanks to a 0-0 draw with Odense BK of Denmark in their final match in the round-robin tournament. China lose their chance of the title as they are also held goalless, in their case by Hong Kong. China had needed a three-goal victory to overtake Malmo . . . Guatemala lose 1-0 at home to Poland in a friendly international.

BRAZIL: Bahia and Internacional qualify both for the final of the national championship and for the South American club cup as they win their domestic semi-finals. Bahia beat Fluminense 2-1 and Internacional beat Gremio by the same margin. Both first legs matches ended goalless. Bahia, in the final's equivalent for the first time in 30 years, beat Fluminense in front of a 110,000 crowd in Salvador's Fonte Nova stadium.

GREECE: Champions Larissa take the lead but eventually lose 4-1 away to Panathinaikos for whom Danish striker Claus Nielsen scores twice. Olympiakos and AEK both lose 1-0 (against PAOK and Aris respectively) but remain joint top of the table. The Salonika match between PAOK and Olympiakos is marred a new hooligan excesses. Police report 17 arrests and 22 fans and officers slightly hurt. The 300 visiting Olympiakos fans are evacuated to the centre of the pitch and ringed by police for two hours for their own protection after the match while PAOK supporters are dispersed.

HOLLAND: Leaders PSV are held 1-1 by Volendam but Ajax, three points behind, fail to take advantage and are held goalless at home by Pec/Zwolle.

ITALY: A match-of-the-day thriller sees Inter lose their first match of the season as they go down 4-3 away to Fiorentina. A superb two-goal display from Stefano Borgonovo — on loan from Milan — brings Fiorentina back from 3-2 down in the last 20 minutes. Napoli move up one point behind Inter thanks to a 3-2 win over Como. Napoli also have to work hard, pulling up from 2-1 down.

SPAIN: Real Madrid maintain their 40-year unbeaten home record against Gijon as they thrash the Asturias team 5-1 before a 70,000 crowd. Gordillo, Butragueno, Michel (two) and Hugo Sanchez score Madrid's goals. Goals from Baquero and Amor bring Barcelona a 2-0 win over Elche.

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 13

ACTION: Egypt lose 4-0 at home to East Germany to Cairo, the hosts' defeat in three years.

ENGLAND: Ted Croker formally retires as secretary of the Football Association admitting one major regret: the absence of English clubs from European comepetition.

FRANCE: Controversial starlet Eric Cantona refuses a transfer from Marseille, who suspended him after a shirt-throwing incident at a charity match, to Bordeaux.

SWITZERLAND: FIFA suspend indefinitely for international matches the Limassol stadium where Cyprus lost 3-2 to Scotland.

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 14

ACTION: Mexico beat Poland 3-1 in Mexico City . . . France lose 2-0 to Arsenal in a Highbury warm-up for their World Cup qualifying visit to Scotland. Martin Hayes and Alan Smith score the goals. Manager Michel Platini says: "Just because we lost to Arsenal doesn't mean we can't beat Scotland."

GREECE: A PAOK fan, in Athens for the cup tie against Panionios, is rushed to hospital with knife wounds to the face and neck after falling victim to a hooligan attack.

UNITED STATES: The Marlboro Cup series is being extended for the next three years. Tournament venues this year are Miami, New York, Chicago and Los Angeles. Taking part alongside the United States national team will be America and Independiente Santa Fe of Colombia, Sporting Cristal of Peru, Juventus of Italy and Portugal's Benfica.

WEST GERMANY: Spies from UEFA Cup rivals Hearts see Bayern Munich lose 4-3 to Karlsruhe in a West German third round cup-tie.

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 15

ACTION: Portugal are held 1-1 in a World Cup group seven European qualifier in Lisbon by Belgium . . . Egypt's Olympic team are beaten 1-0 by East Germany in Cairo . . . Italy beat France 1-0 in an under-21 friendly . . . Racing and Boca of Argentina — mutual title challengers at home in Argentina — draw 1-1 in a South American club cup-tie.

BRAZIL: Bahia come from a goal down to beart Internacional 2-1 in Salvador in the first leg of the Brazilian national championship final. Bobo scores both Bahia goals, Leomir for Inter.

ENGLAND: Gerry Armstrong, former Northern Ireland World Cup star, resigns from his post at Brighton after being given a one-year conditional discharge and fined £200 by a local court for head-butting a fan who insulted him at a reserve game.

GREECE: Three policemen are hurt and two hooligan fans arrested after a Greek cup quarter-final between Panionios and PAOK. Panionios win 3-0 in extra time (3-2 on aggregate) and, at the final whistle, police riot squads are pelted with stones and other missiles. There is serious trouble on Crete, after OFI are eliminated after being held 1-1 by Larissa. Referee Nikos Hrysanis is badly beaten by angry OFI hooligan fans. Seven people are arrested.

ITALY: Napoli president Corrado Ferlaino has fined both Diego Maradona and coach Ottavio Bianchi because of their mutual feuding through newspaper interviews . . . Ruud Gullit asks Milan for £4million to extend his contract — which does not end until June, 1990 — for two further seasons.

SPAIN: Gijon hit back from 5-2 down in the last 20 minutes to draw 5-5 away to Real Madrid in a thrilling second round cup-tie first leg. A goal from Gary Lineker brings Barcelona a 1-0 victory at Santander.

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 16

ACTION: The World Youth Cup gets under way in Riyadh with a 2-1 defeat for the Saudi Arabian hosts by Nigeria. Earlier a 90-minute 'show' including white doves and coloured balloons forms the centre-piece of the opening ceremonials performed by King Fahd.

FRANCE: Eric Cantona agrees to a loan from Marseille to Bordeaux for the rest of the season.

WORLD SOCCER DIARY

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 17

ACTION: In the World Youth Cup in Saudi Arabia Portugal beat Czechoslovakia 1-0, the Soviet Union beat Syria 3-1, Mali hold the United States 1-1 and there are victories for Iraq (1-0 against Norway) and Spain (2-1 against Argentina). The shock of the day sees Costa Rica beat Colombia 1-0 while Brazil underline their favourites role by defeating East Germany easily, 2-0 . . . in Melbourne, Australia beat Malmo 3-2 in a warm-up match for the World Cup qualifying outings against New Zealand and Israel.

GREECE: The referees' union calls a strike for the weekend in protest at violence by both players and fans. Referee Nikos Hrysanis, badly beaten in midweek on Crete, names three OFI players among the hooligans who attacked him at the end of the game.

ITALY: Fiorentina's Stefano Borgonovo is called into Italy's squad for the friendly against Denmark. Squad: Zenga, Tacconi; F.Baresi, Bergomi, Ferrara, Ferri, Maldini; Baggio, Berti, Crippa, Marocchi, De Napoli, Giannini; Borgonovo, Donadoni, Mancini, Serena, Vialli.

PORTUGAL: Belenenses confirm the departure as coach of John Mortimore and are linked with former Irish international and Oxford boss Mark Lawrenson.

SOVIET UNION: Graeme Souness, manager of Glasgow Rangers, turns up at the Soviet national team's training camp in Italy to pursue a renewed bid for the Kiev midfielder Vasily Rats. Espanol of Spain had earlier appeared poised to sign Rats, but the deal fell through.

THE MONTH AHEAD: March

*** signifies World Cup qualifying ties**

1.3.89	C1-2-3 qtr/1
4.3.89	Bangladesh v China*
5.3.89	Israel v N.Zealand*
5.3.89	Iran v Thailand*
7.3.89	U:Scotland v France
7.3.89	U:Albania v England
8.3.89	Hungary v Rep.Ireland*
8.3.89	Albania v England*
8.3.89	Scotland v France*
8.3.89	Bangladesh v Thailand*
10.3.89	Iran v Bangladesh*
10.3.89	Yemen AR v Syria*
12.3.89	Australia v N.Zealand*
15.3.89	S.Arabia v Syria*
15.3.89	C1-2-3 qtr/2
19.3.89	Guatemala v Costa Rica*
19.3.89	Israel v Australia*
20.3.89	Yemen AR v S.Arabia*
22.3.89	Spain v Malta*
22.3.89	Bulgaria v West Germany/f
22.3.89	Holland v Soviet Union/f
22.3.89	U:Cyprus v Spain
25.3.89	Austria v Italy/f (Vienna)
25.3.89	Syria v Yemen AR*
26.3.89	(Easter Sunday)
29.3.89	Greece v Turkey/f
29.3.89	Rumania v Italy/f
30.3.89	Syria v S.Arabia*

EURO RESULTS . . . EURO RESULTS . . .

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 21

Damascus
Syria 0
Soviet Union 2 (Demianenko, Gorlukovich)
HT: 0-2. **Att:** 7,000.
Sov.Union: Chanov (Kharin 46) — Gorlukovich, Shirimbekov, Kuznetsov, Demianenko (Rats 60), Zigmanovich, Aleinikov, Litovchenko (Belanov 65), Yuri Savichev (Ivanauskas 73), Protasov (N.Savichev 70), Mikhailichenko.

A MATCH for the records which immediately preceded the Soviets' two internationals in Kuwait. As explained in a previous report, one of the Kuwait matches could not be counted as a full international because of the presence as a guest in the action of Michel Platini. No such problems for the Syria visit.

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 23

Valletta — intl friendly
Malta 1 (Carabott 16)
Cyprus 1 (I.Ioannou 81)
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 2,000. **Ref:** Agius (Mal)
Malta: Cluett — Scicluna (Woods), Alex Azzopardi, Galea, Brincat, Buttigieg, Suda (Saliba), Scerri (S.Vella), Carabott, Degiorgio, Gregory.
Cyprus: Pantzarias — Kalotheou (Kastanas), Pittas, Papacostas, Stavrou, Petsas (Tsingis), Andreou (Hadziloizou), Nicolau, Christofi (I.Ioannou), Ioannou, Christodolou.

ALL-SQUARE between two of Europe's more experienced minnows.

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 24

Dubai — intl friendly
United Arab Emirates 0
Bulgaria 1 (Kostadinov 26)
HT: 0-1. **Att:** 4,000.
Bulgaria: Donev — Kiriakov, D.Mladenov, Bezinski (Tr.Ivanov) — N.Iliev, Dochev — Em.Kostadinov, Sadkov (Rakov), L.Penev (Yordanov), Kirov (Balakov), Stoichkov.

NO PROBLEMS for Bulgaria as they gave the Emirates a useful outing in preparation for the Asian section of the World Cup qualifiers.

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 11

Valletta — intl friendly
Malta 1 (Carabott 32)
Israel 2 (Menachem 12, Sinai 89)
HT: 1-1. **Att:** 2,000. **Ref:** Victor Mintoff (Mal)
Malta: Cluett — Edwin Camilleri (Gregory), Azzopardi, Galea, S.Camilleri (Zerafa), H.Suda, Busuttil, R.Vella, Carabott, Scerri (S.Vella), Degiorgio.
Israel: Gilardi — Haroni (Amar), Cohen, Klinger (Levin), J.Zana, Ilouz, Sinai, Halevi, Drieks, Duadi, Menachem.

MALTA'S defeat in this friendly against the Israelis suggests they will prove little more effective as rivals for Northern and Southern Ireland than in their opening World Cup qualifier, when they went down 3-0 in Belfast last May. Malta appeared to be getting the better of the opening exchanges when Israel broke away to take the lead through Yigal Menachem in only the 12th minute. Spain's manager Luis Suarez was among the crowd. After Carabott's equaliser Degiorgio was denied by the woodwork but Malta faded after that and Israel just about deserved their late winner.

El Mahalla — intl friendly
Egypt 2 (Hjelm og 30, El Kas 84)
Finland 1 (Paatelainen 14)
HT: 1-1. **Att:** 40,000.
Finland: Laukkanen — Makela, Pekonen (Myyry 46), Heikkinen, Kanerva, Petaja — Alatensio (Tarkkio 70), Ukkonen, Hjelm — Paatelainen, Lius (Rantanen 80).

FINLAND appeared safely in control after Mika-Matti Paatelainen converted a pass from Ismo Lius to open the scoring. On the half-hour, however, Ari Hjelm deflected a cross-shot from Ahmed El Kas past Laukkanen. It was El Kas who grabbed an unassisted winner just before the end.

FRIDAY, JANUARY 13

Cairo — intl friendly
Egypt 2 (Hisham Abdel Rasul 7, Khaled Eid 80)
Finland 1 (Tarkkio 42)
HT: 1-1. **Att:** 8,000.
Finland: Eckerman (Hutunen 46) — Makela, Europaeus, Tarkkio, Kanerva, Petaja (Heikkinen 60) — Alatensio (Ukkonen 46), Myyry, Roth, Rantanen (Tegelberg 75), Lius.

A DISAPPOINTMENT for Finland manager Jukka Vakkila who had expected that his men would have adjusted to the conditions better than they did. Kimmo Tarkkio gave the visitors hope when he converted a pass from Ismo Lius just before half-time. But the Egyptians, in mid-season, proved just too sharp for rusty Finns.

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 18

Tirana — intl friendly
Albania 1 (Minga 19)
Greece 1 (Tsiantakis 55)
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 8,200. **Ref:** Kotherja (Alb)
Albania: Skhurti (Dosti 78) — Zmijani, Hodja, Lekbello (Stafa 46), Jera, Gega, Josa (Kepa 69), Demollari, Millo, Minga, Shehu (Majaci 65).
Greece: Ikonomopulos — Apostolakis, Mavridis, Tsaluhidis, Hadjithanasiou, Kutulas (Papadopulos 53), Borbokis, Noblias, Lagonidis (Kavuras 57), Karasavidis (Kalogeropulos 69), Tsiantakis (Ikonomidis 88).

UNTIL this season Albania did not play friendly matches, only competitive internationals and then, it often appeared, reluctantly. However, since last August they have drawn 0-0 at home to Cuba, lost 3-0 away to Rumania and now drawn 1-1 at home to Greece. That illustrates two points: firstly, that Albania as a nation are slowly reintegrating at international political level and, secondly, just how seriously they are preparing for the all-important first-ever visit of England in March. Manager Shyqeri Rreli was not too happy with his men's display in this match. He had taken the occasion of a rare friendly to test out some younger players but admitted, after the match, that they had not come up to scratch.

SUNDAY, JANUARY 22

Valletta — WC Euro gp 6
Malta 0
Spain 2 (Michel 15 pen, Beguiristain 49)
HT: 0-1. **Att:** 30,000. **Ref:** Syme (Scot)
Malta: Cluett — S.Camilleri (E.Camilleri 53), Azzopardi, Galea, Brincat (Scerri 46), Buttigieg, Busuttil, Vella, Carabott, Degiorgio, Gregory.
Spain: Zubizarreta — Quique, Jimenez, Andrinua, Sanchis, Roberto, Manolo, Michel, Butragueno (Gorriz 76), Martin Vazquez, Beguiristain (Eusebio 65).

GROUP favourites Spain left the two Irelands trailing further in their wake with their third consecutive victory in the group. Malta on home territory are a much more awkward proposition than away. Galea in the centre of defence was a tenacious marker for Butragueno. But with midfield general Michel at his best, Spain were always a class ahead. Michel opened the scoring with a penalty conversion after Azzopardi fouled Manolo but Malta came close to a half-hour equaliser when a Martin Gregory header forced a spectacular save from Zubizarreta. Four minutes after the interval Barcelona's Beguiristain secured Spain's victory with a solo effort. Martin Vazquez and Manuel Sanchis both came close to further goals but Spain shut up shop after Sanchis was sent off in the 74th minute for a second bookable offence.

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 25

Athens — friendly
Greece 1 (Borbokis 62)
Portugal 2 (Nunes 6, Paneira 64)
HT: 0-1. **Att:** 10,000.
Greece: Ikonomopulos — Apostolakis, Manolas (Vakalopulos 46), Hadziathansiou, Mavridis (Kutulas 46) — Tsaluhides (Maragos 70), Borbokis (Tsiantakis, Samaras — Nobiias, Kalogeropulos (Kaviras 70).
Portugal: Silvino — Joao Pinto, Sobrinho, Oliveira, Veloso — Nunes, Araujo Paneira (Carlos Pinto 80), Sousa, Semedo — Rui Barros, Jordao (Jorge Placido 59).

GREECE turned in both a disappointing result and performance against a 'new-look' Portugal. The Greeks struggled in the first half after quickly going a goal down to Nunes. Even when they battled on terms they immediately relaxed, to fatal effect, as Portugal hit back for Araujo's winner. Portugal manager Juca was disappointed that Atletico Madrid refused to release Paolo Futre but at least Juventus 'freed' Rui Barros. Not that this was such a hardship for Juventus since Barros had recently been dropped as well as suspended (for insulting the referee after a 2-1 league defeat by Fiorentina).

SUNDAY, JANUARY 29

Guayaquil — intl friendly
Ecuador 1 (Aviles 41)
Chile 0
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 10,000. **Ref:** Alfredo Rodas (Ec)
Ecuador: Morales — Quinteros (Alcivar), Macias, Quinonez, Capurro — Aguinaga, Cuvi (Cardenas), Marsetti (Minda), Fajardo — Tenorio (Verduga), Aviles.
Chile: Wirth — Ahumada, Contreras, Figueroa, Lacroix (Hernandez) — Ramos (Martinez), Carrasco, Perez (Carreno), Valdez — Olguin (Alvarez), Ramirez.

EUCADOR'S victory should not be considered too significant a pointer to Chile's prospects when they come to Europe in May for the Rous Cup duels with Scotland and England. The Chilean team was based on champions Cobreloa but lacked the stars of Colo Colo, Iquique, Universidad Catolica and La Serena, all of whom were engaged in a Libertadores Cup 'liguilla'. Ecuador's Yugoslav coach, Dusan Drascovich, had just enjoyed the luxury of more than a month together with his players and must have been disappointed at the narrow margin of victory. Ecuador dominated the first half and Chile the second but it was Ecuador who celebrated the only goal, scored by local Footballer of the Year Raul Aviles.

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 7

Dublin — friendly intl
Rep.Ireland 0
France 0
Att: 22,000. **Ref:** Lloyd (Wal)
Rep.Ireland: Bonner — Morris, Hughton, McCarthy, Brady, Whelan, Houghton, Stapleton (Aldridge 76), Cascarino, Townsend.
France: Bats — Amoros, Kastendeuch, Sonor, Battiston, Silvestre (Roche 74), Durand, Sauzee, Paille (Toure 46), Papin, Blanc (Vercruysse 68).

MICHEL Platini's new-look France produced a display in rainsoaked Dalymount Park which delighted their manager in his preparations for the all-important World Cup visit to Hampden Park, Glasgow. There was to be no third anniversary celebration for Jack Charlton, even though the Irish enjoyed long spells of territorial superiority. Platini's three centre-backs (Kastendeuch, Battiston and Sulvestre) made sure of that. Veteran Liam Brady was superb in midfield in his 68th international, but the Irish had to wait until the 54th minute before manufacturing their best chance. Stapleton challenged Bats for a cross but, when the ball fell loose, Ray Houghton's shot ricocheted off the grounded Stapleton to safety. The best French chance fell to new cap Laurent Blanc, of Montpellier, in the 27th minute. He raced clear only to see Bonner parry his shot brilliantly and Mick McCarthy, on his 30th birthday, clear.

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 8

Limassol — WC Euro gp 5
Cyprus 2 (Koliandris 14, Iannou 47)
Scotland 3 (Johnston 9, Gough 54, 90)
HT: 1-1. **Att:** 25,000. **Ref:** Kirschen (EG)
Cyprus: Pantzarias — Pittas, Miamiliotis (Andrelis 77), Christodolou, Socratous, Yiangudakis, Koliandris, Savva (Petsas 39), Savvides, Iannu, Nikolau.
Scotland: Leighton — Gough, Malpas, Aitken, McLeish, Narey, Nicol (I.Ferguson 10), McStay, McClair, Speedie (McInally 78), Johnston.

CYPRUS, to their fans' violent fury, paid dearly for some blatant and prolonged time-wasting in the second half. East German referee Siegried Kirschen had added on more than five minutes as compensation of which Richard Gough took huge advantage. Cyprus, after their best performance for years, were left with only the bitter prospect of a fine and ground suspension for the crowd riot. Kirschen was struck by a missile and punched by one fan as he and the Scotland team sought safety among riot police at the end of the match. Yet Scotland need never have allowed the situation to deteriorate so. In the ninth minute Mo Johnston scored after a defensive mistake only for Christos Koliandris to punish a David Narey error five minutes later. More defensive confusion allowed Ioannis Iannu to put Cyprus ahead early in the second half — and sting Gough into a one-man recovery unit. In the 54th minute he shot the equaliser before popping up in those controversial closing seconds to head the winner. Scotland might have had both points sewn up earlier had Johnston's 80th-minute effort not struck the bar.

Athens — intl friendly
Greece 1 (Saravakos 2 pen)
England 2 (Barnes 9, Robson 79)
HT: 1-1. **Att:** 6,000. **Ref:** Holzmann (Aus)
Greece: Economopulos — Hatzithanasiu (Manolas 72), Kutulas, Kalitzakis, Mavrides, Tsaluhides, Saravakos, Lagonidis (Borbokis 39), Samaras (Kalogeropulos 46), Nioblias, Tsiantakis.
England: Shilton — Stevens, Pearce, Webb, Walker, Butcher, Robson, Rocastle, Alan Smith (Beardsley 78), Lineker, Barnes.

A SUPERB volley by skipper Bryan Robson rescued Bobby Robson from what would certainly have been another mauling from the tabloid Press. Thus England ended in charge of a match they appeared to be well on the way to losing in the second minute when Butcher brought down Samaras and Dimitris Saravkos converted from the penalty spot. It took England only seven minutes to pull level. This time a free kick scissors trick ended with Barnes chipping his shot over the wall and then celebrating as it bounced down from the bar, struck the diving goalkeeper on the head and rebounded over the goal-line. Manager Bobby Robson said: "It was a fairly satisfactory performance but we must be careful not to become a little complacent and ease up when we think we are in charge."

Tev-Aviv/Ramat Gan — intl friendly
Israel 3 (Klinger 6, Alon 7, Drieks 73)
Wales 3 (Horne 11, Aharoni og 57, Allen 87)
HT: 2-1. **Att:** 6,000. **Ref:** Ulf Eriksson (Swe)
Israel: Gilardi — Amar, Aharoni, Klnger, Davidi, Alon, Sinai, Pizanti, Levin (Atar 79), Rosenthal, Menahem (Drieks 46).
Wales: Dibble — Gareth Hall (Slatter 68), Bowen, Nicholas, Ratcliffe, Geraint Williams (Malcolm Allen 68), Horne, Blackmore, Hughes, Saunders, Pascoe.

MANCHESTER City goalkeeper Andy Dibble had a nightmare match, conceding two soft goals to Nir Klinger and Nir Alon in the first seven minutes. Wales, without injured Ian Rush, took an hour to pull level through Horne and an Eitan Aharoni own goal — and then almost let the match escape them again. Israel, preparing for their Oceania World Cup qualifiers against Australia and New Zealand, regained the lead when substitute Eliezar Drieks bundled aside Peter Nicholas to shoot home. It was Wales substitute Malcolm Allen who saved the day in the closing minutes with a superb volleyed equaliser.

Belfast — WC Euro gp 6
Northern Ireland 0
Spain 2 (Andrinua 3, Manolo 84)
HT: 0-1. **Att:** 20,000. **Ref:** Pauly (WG)
N. Ireland: McKnight — Ramsey, Rogan, Donaghy, McClelland, D.Wilson (Clarke 68), Dennison (O'Neill 63), Sanchez, Quinn, K.Wilson, Black.
Spain: Zubizarreta — Chendo (Eusebio 39), Jimenez, Andrinua, Serna, Gorriz, Baquero (Manolo 70), Michel, Butragueno, Roberto, Martin Vazquez.

SPAIN'S fourth victory in four qualifying matches kept them firmly on course for a place in the finals in Italy — but it all but destroyed Irish dreams. The writing was on the wall after only three minutes when Genaro Andrinua headed home a cross from Michel, who was himself foiled only by a fine save from McKnight 11 minutes later. It was not until Zubizarreta was tested by Danny Wilson just before half-time that the Barcelona keeper came under serious pressure. The Irish tried to make up for lost time after the interval and Spain manager Luis Suarez was ordered off the bench by referee Pauly for his tactical directions of defence from the touchline. Suarez had already sown the seeds of security, however. Two minutes before his 'expulsion' he substituted Baquero with Manolo and it was the Atletico Madrid forward who scored the decisive second goal six minutes from time. Again Michel was the creator.

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 12

Guatemala City — intl friendly
Guatemala 0
Poland 1 (K.Warzycha 58)
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 23,000. **Ref:** Burgos (Gua)
Guatemala: Piccinini — Davila, Wellman, Monzon, Ortiz Obregon (Rivera), Funes, Macdonald (Wesphal), Deballos, Chacon, De Leon (Batres), Paniagua.
Poland: Wandzik — Jegor, Szuster, D.Lukasik, Wijas, Rzepka (Prusik), Tarasiewicz, Urban, K.Warzycha, Kosecki, Kaczmarek (Wdowczyk).

A DISORGANISED Guatemala, looking ahead to their CONCACAF World Cup play-off group, were no match for Poland. The visitors might have won by a larger margin than the single goal clipped past keeper Ricardo Piccinini by Krzystof Warzycha.

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 13

Cairo — intl friendly
Egypt 0
East Germany 4 (Kirsten 4, 83, Thom 42, 87)
HT: 2-0. **Att:** 20,000.

MANFRED Zapf's reign as East German manager could not have started in a more positive fashion. Once the East Germans had weathered early pressure from their Egyptian hosts they dominated the match — to the crowd's intense displeasure. Ulf Kirsten opened the scoring after only four minutes when he headed in a pass from Thom, who added a second goal himself just before half-time. Rene Muller, restored to the East German goal, had only one shot to save throughout the 45 minutes, catching a soft effort from Ahmed El Kas. The Egyptians brought on three substitutes, to no avail, in the second half. In the final seven minutes Kirsten scored again himself and made the East Germans' fourth for Thom.

OTHER MATCHES

Jan 18: Turkey U21 2, Italy U21 2.
Jan 18: Albania U21 0, Greece U21 1.
Jan 24: Israel 0, Kiev Dynamo 4.
Jan 25: Portimonense 1, Bulgaria 3.
Feb 14: Arsenal 2, France 0.

MEXICO

First Division (15 games)
Group 1: America 18, Monterrey 15, Irapuato 12, Cruz Azul 11, Toluca 9.
Group 2: Puebla 23, Atlante 21, Universidad Guadalajara 14, Santos 13, Universidad Nuevo Leon 10.
Group 3: Morelia 15, Necaxa & Guadalajara 14, Tampico Madero 13, At. Potosino 8.
Group 4: Universidad Autonoma Mexico 22, Universidad Autonama Guadalajara 21, Atlas 15, Correcaminos 15, Cobras 14.
(*Top two of each group qualify for quarter-finals after 38 games.)

1988-90 EUROPEAN UNDER-21 CHAMPIONSHIP

Group 1
(Greece, Denmark, Bulgaria, Rumania)

18.10.88	Greece v Denmark	2-2
18.10.88	Bulgaria v Rumania	2-1
1.11.88	Denmark v Bulgaria	1-3
1.11.88	Rumania v Greece	2-0
25. 4.89	Bulgaria v Denmark	
25. 4.89	Greece v Rumania	
16. 5.89	Denmark v Greece	
16. 5.89	Rumania v Bulgaria	
10.10.89	Denmark v Rumania	
10.10.89	Bulgaria v Greece	
14.11.89	Rumania v Denmark	
14.11.89	Greece v Bulgaria	

Group 2
(England, Sweden, Poland, Albania)

18.10.88	England v Sweden	1-1
18.10.88	Poland v Albania	0-0
4.11.88	Albania v Sweden	0-2
7. 3.89	Albania v England	
25. 4.89	England v Albania	
6. 5.89	Sweden v Poland	
2. 6.89	England v Poland	
5. 9.89	Sweden v England	
7.10.89	Sweden v Albania	
10.10.89	Poland v England	
24.10.89	Poland v Sweden	
14.11.89	Poland v Sweden	

Group 3
(Soviet Union, Austria, Turkey, East Germany)

18.10.88	Soviet Union v Austria	2-2
1.11.88	Austria v Turkey	3-0
29.11.88	Turkey v East Germany	3-2
11. 4.89	East Germany v Turkey	
25. 4.89	Soviet Union v East Germany	
9. 5.89	Turkey v Soviet Union	
16. 5.89	East Germany v Austria	
5. 9.89	Austria v Soviet Union	
6.10/		
7.10.89	East Germany v Soviet Union	
24.10.89	Turkey v Austria	
7.11.89	Soviet Union v Turkey	
14.11.89	Austria v East Germany	

Group 4
(Finland, West Germany, Iceland, Holland)

30. 8.88	Finland v West Germany	0-3
13. 9.88	Iceland v Holland	1-1
28. 9.88	Finland v Iceland	2-1
18.10.88	West Germany v Holland	2-0
25. 4.89	Holland v West Germany	
30. 5.89	Finland v Holland	
30. 5.89	Iceland v West Germany	
5. 9.89	Iceland v Finland	
3.10.89	West Germany v Finland	
10.10.89	Holland v Iceland	
25.10.89	West Germany v Iceland	
14.11.89	Holland v Finland	

Group 5
(Norway, Scotland, France, Yugoslavia)

13. 9.88	Norway v Scotland	1-1
27. 9.88	France v Norway	2-0
18.10.88	Scotland v Yugoslavia	0-2
18.11.88	Yugoslavia v France	2-2
7. 3.89	Scotland v France	
24. 4.89	France v Yugoslavia	
13. 6.89	Norway v Yugoslavia	
5. 9.89	Norway v France	
5. 9.89	Yugoslavia v Scotland	
10.10.89	Yugoslavia v Norway	
10.10.89	France v Scotland	
14.11.89	Scotland v Norway	

Group 6
(Cyprus, Hungary, Spain)

11.12.88	Cyprus v Hungary	0-0
22. 3.89	Cyprus v Spain	
12. 4.89	Hungary v Cyprus	
31. 5.89	Spain v Cyprus	
10.10.89	Hungary v Spain	
14.11.89	Spain v Hungary	

Group 7
(Czechoslovakia, Belgium, Portugal, Luxembourg)

15.11.88	Czechoslovakia v Belgium	0-3
14. 2.89	Portugal v Belgium	
5. 4.89	Czechoslovakia v Luxembourg	
25. 4.89	Portugal v Luxembourg	
29. 4.89	Belgium v Czechoslovakia	
26. 5.89	Luxembourg v Belgium	
5. 9.89	Belgium v Portugal	
5.10.89	Czechoslovakia v Portugal	
9.10.89	Luxembourg v Portugal	
24.10.89	Belgium v Luxembourg	
14.11.89	Portugal v Luxembourg	
29.11.89	Luxembourg v Czechoslovakia	

Group 8
(Switzerland, Italy, San Marino)

26. 4.89	Switzerland v Italy
6. 6.89	San Marino v Switzerland
4.10.89	San Marino v Italy
25.10.89	Italy v Switzerland
14.11.89	Switzerland v San Marino
29.11.89	Italy v San Marino

LEAGUE TABLES . . . LEAGUE TABLES . . .

ALBANIA

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Partizani	18	12	3	3	30	14	27
17 Nentori	18	11	3	4	34	16	25
Dinamo	18	9	6	3	20	14	24
Apolonia	18	9	5	4	27	7	23
Vllaznia	18	9	3	6	25	20	21
Besëlidhja	18	8	4	6	22	18	20
Labinoti	18	7	5	6	23	21	19
Flamurtari	18	7	2	9	22	26	16
Skenderbeu	18	4	4	10	11	25	12
Besa	18	5	1	12	22	31	11
Lokomotiva	18	3	4	11	11	29	10
Traktori	18	2	4	12	9	35	8

CYPRUS

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Omonia	18	11	6	1	41	13	28
Apolion	18	10	7	1	37	17	27
Apoel	18	11	2	5	35	28	24
Anortosi	17	8	5	4	22	16	21
Pezoporikos	18	5	10	3	20	18	20
AEL	18	5	8	5	28	23	18
Apop	18	6	6	6	21	23	18
Paralimni	17	4	9	4	23	29	17
Salamina	16	4	8	4	27	24	16
Ethnikos	18	5	5	8	22	32	15
Aris	18	4	6	8	23	25	14
EPA	18	4	6	8	22	25	14
Olympiakos	17	3	8	6	26	29	14
Keravnos	18	4	6	8	19	25	14
Aradippu	17	1	2	14	11	50	4

GREECE

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Olympiakos	18	11	4	3	34	13	26
AEK Athens	18	11	4	3	25	10	26
Iraklis	18	8	7	3	29	18	23
PAOK	18	9	4	5	26	19	22
Panathinaikos	18	8	5	5	27	17	21
Larissa	18	7	7	4	19	14	21
Aris	18	6	8	4	16	11	20
OFI Crete	18	8	4	6	25	23	20
Levadiakos	18	6	5	7	18	23	17
Doxa	18	5	6	7	15	16	16
Panionios	18	6	4	8	19	22	16
Olymp. Volos	18	3	9	6	17	24	15
Ethnikos	18	3	7	8	16	28	13
Diagoras	18	3	6	9	14	28	12
Apollon	18	2	7	9	14	24	11
Kalamaria	18	1	7	10	11	35	9

LUXEMBOURG

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Jeunnesse	15	12	1	2	40	4	25
Union	15	10	2	3	39	13	22
Red Boys	15	8	5	2	21	10	21
Spora	15	7	6	2	26	13	20
Beggen	15	6	5	4	23	18	17
Grevenmacher	15	5	2	8	21	32	12
Hesperange	15	4	3	8	15	30	11
Eischen	15	2	4	9	15	37	8
Niedercorn	15	3	1	11	13	33	7
Pétange	15	2	3	10	13	36	7

TURKEY

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Fenerbahce	21	16	4	1	54	15	52
Besiktas	20	15	5	0	48	9	50
Sariyer	20	12	2	6	37	25	38
Galatasaray	21	10	7	4	39	19	37
Boluspor	20	11	3	6	34	23	36
Ankaragucu	21	11	3	7	27	26	36
Trabzonspor	21	10	5	6	37	19	35
Malatya	20	7	5	8	34	37	26
Bursaspor	21	7	4	10	24	32	25
A. Demirspor	21	7	4	10	29	40	25
Sakarya	20	6	4	10	20	30	22
Rizespor	21	6	4	11	18	41	22
Altay	21	6	3	12	25	37	21
Eskisehir	21	5	6	10	17	29	21
Konyaspor	20	6	3	11	16	34	21
Samsunspor	18	4	7	7	12	16	19
Karsiyaka	20	4	7	9	29	35	19
Adana	20	4	6	10	24	35	18
K. Maras	21	1	10	10	11	33	13

TUNISIA

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Esperance	15	10	4	1	27	8	49
Stade Tunisien	15	8	5	2	22	15	44
RS Sfax	15	7	5	3	22	13	41
Club Africain	15	7	4	4	19	15	40
COT	15	6	5	4	19	15	38
Etoile du Sahel	15	4	7	4	18	16	34
US Monastir	15	3	10	2	18	16	34
CS Sfax	15	4	7	4	11	17	34
AS Kasserine	15	4	5	6	10	24	32
Ol. Béja	15	5	1	9	15	18	31
CA Bizerta	15	2	8	5	8	10	29
AS Marsa	15	2	7	6	15	15	28
JS Kairouan	15	3	5	7	12	16	28
OC Kerkennah	15	1	5	9	8	20	23

ALGERIA

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
M. d'Alger	16	10	2	4	18	10	22
Tizi-Ouzou	16	8	5	3	15	10	21
El-Harrach	16	7	6	3	13	9	20
Sidi-Bel-Abbès	16	7	5	4	22	15	19
Tiaret	16	7	5	4	21	17	19
Ass. d'Oran	16	6	5	5	16	14	17
Annaba	16	5	6	5	13	11	16
Relizane	16	5	6	5	15	16	16
Bordj-Menaïel	16	6	3	7	19	15	15
M. d'Oran	16	5	5	6	18	18	15
Union d'Alger	16	3	8	5	12	16	14
Aïn-M'Lila	16	2	9	5	9	12	13
Constantine	16	3	7	6	12	16	13
Kouba	16	3	6	7	12	18	12
Aïn-Beida	16	4	4	8	12	20	12
Collo	16	3	6	7	11	20	12

CAMEROON

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Tonnerre	15	10	3	2	20	7	33
Unisport	15	8	4	3	23	14	27
Racing	15	7	6	2	20	10	27
Canon	15	7	4	4	16	12	25
Prévoyance	15	6	6	3	20	13	24
Union	15	6	5	4	19	13	23
Dynamo	15	6	5	4	15	12	23
Caïman	15	5	4	6	18	18	19
Diamant	15	4	6	5	14	14	18
Colombe	15	4	6	5	12	13	18
Panthere	15	5	3	7	10	18	18
P.W.D.	15	4	6	5	6	11	18
Cammark	15	5	1	9	12	17	16
Fédéral	15	3	6	6	13	19	15
Aigle	15	3	5	7	8	13	14
Entente	15	1	3	11	12	33	6

BELGIUM

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Mechelen	22	17	4	1	46	14	38
Anderlecht	22	15	5	2	55	20	35
FC Liege	22	11	8	3	43	16	30
Club Brugge	22	11	7	4	42	21	29
FC Antwerp	22	10	8	4	40	26	28
Standard Liege	22	9	6	7	31	28	24
Sint Truiden	22	9	6	7	25	20	24
Waregem	22	10	3	9	37	34	23
FC Kortrijk	22	7	9	6	36	38	23
Beveren	22	7	5	10	24	30	19
Charleroi	22	4	11	7	19	31	19
Lierse	22	6	5	11	15	33	17
Lokeren	22	5	7	10	25	32	17
Beerschot	22	5	7	10	25	35	17
RWDM	22	6	3	13	19	41	15
RC Mechelen	22	5	5	12	24	41	15
Cercle	22	4	4	14	21	35	12
RC Genk	22	2	7	13	13	45	11

FRANCE

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Marseille	27	14	10	3	41	24	52
Paris St Germain	27	15	7	5	33	19	52
Auxerre	27	15	5	7	32	22	50
Sochaux	27	13	9	5	35	19	48
Nantes	27	13	7	7	36	30	46
Monaco	27	11	10	6	39	28	43
Lille	27	11	7	9	32	27	40
Montpellier	27	10	9	8	38	37	39
Toulouse	27	9	11	7	34	30	38
Cannes	27	11	5	11	33	35	38
Metz	27	10	7	10	32	29	37
Toulon	27	9	10	8	20	19	37
Bordeaux	27	7	10	10	34	31	31
St Etienne	27	7	7	13	26	41	28
Strasbourg	27	7	4	16	33	44	25
Matra Racing	26	6	7	13	34	40	25
Caen	27	6	7	14	22	42	25
Laval	27	5	8	14	23	37	23
Lens	26	2	5	19	27	53	11

ENGLAND

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Arsenal	24	15	6	3	50	24	51
Norwich City	24	13	8	3	36	25	47
Manchester United	24	10	9	5	34	19	39
Nottingham Forest	24	9	11	4	34	26	38
Coventry City	24	10	7	7	33	25	37
Liverpool	23	9	9	5	30	20	36
Millwall	23	10	6	7	35	30	36
Derby County	23	10	5	8	26	18	35
Everton	24	8	9	7	29	26	33
Wimbledon	23	9	5	9	27	30	32
Aston Villa	25	7	9	9	34	38	30
Middlesbrough	24	8	6	10	30	36	30
Luton Town	24	7	8	9	27	29	29
Southampton	25	6	10	9	37	47	28
Tottenham	24	6	9	9	34	36	27
QPR	25	6	8	11	24	24	26
Charlton	24	5	9	10	26	35	24
Sheffield Wed	24	5	9	10	19	34	24
Newcastle United	24	5	6	13	21	43	21
West Ham	23	4	5	14	20	41	17

ITALY

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Internazionale	18	13	4	1	31	10	30
Napoli	18	12	4	2	36	14	28
Sampdoria	18	9	7	2	25	10	25
Atalanta	18	6	10	2	19	14	22
Milan	18	8	6	4	27	14	22
Juventus	18	6	8	4	25	20	20
Fiorentina	18	7	4	7	25	27	18
Roma	18	6	6	6	20	22	18
Verona	18	3	10	5	12	16	16
Pescara	18	5	6	7	20	24	16
Lazio	18	2	11	5	10	14	15
Cesena	18	3	9	6	10	17	15
Bologna	18	6	3	9	16	23	15
Como	18	4	6	8	14	24	14
Lecce	18	5	4	9	13	22	14
Pisa	18	3	7	8	9	18	13
Torino	18	3	6	9	15	21	12
Ascoli	18	4	3	11	13	25	11

PORTUGAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Benfica	26	18	6	2	39	10	42
Porto	26	13	11	2	32	13	37
Boavista	26	13	6	7	37	19	32
Guimaraes	26	11	8	7	27	19	30
Sporting	26	11	8	7	34	21	30
Setubal	26	11	6	9	31	27	28
Amadora	26	10	6	10	22	29	26
Penafiel	26	9	8	9	25	24	26
Belenenses	26	7	12	7	29	23	26
Nacional	26	10	6	10	33	36	26
Maritimo	26	7	11	8	27	26	25
Braga	26	9	7	10	25	27	25
Chaves	26	9	7	10	24	24	25
Beira-Mar	26	7	10	9	22	21	23
Espinho	26	8	6	12	33	39	22
Leixoes	26	7	7	12	20	28	21
Fafe	26	6	9	11	18	33	21
Portimonense	26	6	8	12	17	28	20
Farense	26	5	8	13	12	36	18
Viseu	26	5	7	14	15	40	17

SPAIN

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Real Madrid	21	14	7	0	52	22	35
Barcelona	22	14	6	2	47	17	34
Atletico Madrid	22	11	5	6	39	24	27
Valencia	22	8	9	5	21	18	25
Celta	21	9	7	5	21	23	25
Valladolid	22	10	4	8	22	16	24
Osasuna	21	8	7	6	26	24	23
Bilbao	22	7	9	6	23	22	23
Gijon	22	8	7	7	24	24	23
Sevilla	22	7	8	7	24	23	22
Zaragoza	22	7	8	7	26	28	22
Oviedo	22	7	7	8	22	23	21
Logrones	22	6	9	7	14	19	21
Real Sociedad	21	6	8	7	21	25	20
Murcia	22	7	3	12	21	34	17
Malaga	22	5	7	10	21	28	17
Betis	22	3	10	9	20	30	16
Cadiz	22	4	8	10	15	26	16
Espanol	22	2	9	11	20	34	13
Elche	22	4	4	14	16	35	12

WEST GERMANY

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Bayern Munich	18	9	9	0	35	13	27
Koln	18	10	3	5	30	13	23
Werder Bremen	18	8	7	3	31	20	23
Hamburg	17	9	4	4	30	18	22
Stuttgart	18	8	5	5	33	26	21
Bayer Leverkusen	18	5	10	3	25	21	20
Borussia Mg	16	6	7	3	22	19	19
Karlsruhe	17	8	3	6	28	25	19
Bayer Uerdingen	18	5	9	4	24	21	19
Bor. Dortmund	18	5	8	5	26	17	18
Kaiserslautern	18	5	8	5	28	23	18
St. Pauli	18	4	10	4	20	21	18
Bochum	17	5	6	6	20	22	16
Nurnberg	18	5	3	10	21	34	13
Eintracht Frankfurt	18	4	4	10	10	29	12
Stuttgart Kickers	17	3	5	9	20	44	11
Hannover	18	2	6	10	16	33	10
Waldhof Mannheim	18	1	7	10	14	34	9

NORTHERN IRELAND

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Linfield	16	14	1	1	37	13	43
Glentoran	17	11	2	4	46	24	35
Coleraine	17	11	2	4	29	14	30
Bangor	16	8	6	2	28	18	20
Glenavon	17	8	3	6	33	36	27
Portadown	16	8	3	5	22	13	27
Cliftonville	17	5	7	5	29	22	22
Ballymena	16	5	6	5	25	27	21
Larne	16	5	4	7	29	26	19
Carrick	16	5	2	9	14	27	17
Crusaders	17	4	2	11	17	33	14
Newry	15	4	1	10	15	28	13
Ards	17	3	3	11	20	38	12
Distillery	17	2	2	13	16	53	8

HOLLAND

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
PSV	21	16	2	3	47	19	34
Ajax	21	13	3	5	45	24	29
Feyenoord	21	11	5	5	44	33	27
FC Twente	21	8	10	3	31	15	26
Roda JC	21	8	7	6	29	23	23
Fortuna S.	21	9	5	7	29	24	23
FC Groningen	21	8	6	7	38	28	22
Volendam	21	9	4	8	32	34	22
Den Bosch	21	9	3	9	28	37	21
Haarlem	21	8	4	9	27	32	20
Sparta	21	6	7	8	29	31	19
FC Utrecht	21	7	5	9	31	37	19
RKC	21	7	4	10	37	42	18
PEC Zwolle	21	7	4	10	35	41	18
MVV	21	5	6	10	29	41	16
SC Veendam	21	6	3	12	21	38	15
Willem II	21	3	8	10	27	43	14
VVV	21	1	10	10	21	38	12

SCOTLAND

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Rangers	26	17	4	5	42	20	38
Dundee United	26	13	10	3	36	13	36
Aberdeen	26	11	12	3	34	22	34
Celtic	26	15	2	9	54	37	32
Hibernian	25	10	7	8	26	23	27
St Mirren	25	9	6	10	27	34	24
Hearts	26	6	10	10	27	29	22
Dundee	26	5	9	12	23	33	19
Motherwell	26	5	8	13	24	35	18
Hamilton	26	3	2	21	13	60	8

EIRE

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Derry City	25	17	5	3	57	18	39
Dundalk	25	14	9	2	42	22	37
St Patrick's Ath	25	12	10	3	33	12	34
Limerick City	25	13	7	5	44	29	33
Bohemians	25	10	5	10	45	32	25
Aathlone Town	25	9	7	9	22	20	25
Shelbourne	25	7	9	9	22	29	23
Shamrock Rovers	25	5	10	10	27	37	20
Cork City	25	6	7	12	22	27	19
Cobb Ramblers	25	5	6	14	23	44	16
Galway United	25	4	8	13	21	48	16
Waterford United	25	4	5	16	14	44	13

CHILE

1) Cobreloa 40 points; 2) Cobresal 37; 3) Iquique 34; 4) Universidad Catolica 33; 5) La Serena 32; 6) Colo Colo 31; 7) Fernandez Vial 30; 8) Huachipato, Concepcion 29; 10) Valdivia, Everton 28; 12) Naval 27; 13) Unión Española, O'Higgins, Universidad de Chile 26; 16) Palestino 24 — all in 30 games.

URUGUAY

Libertadores Cup play-off "Liguilla" (final standings)

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Peñarol	5	4	1	0	16	4	9
Defensor	5	2	2	1	8	8	6
Danubio	5	2	1	2	5	8	5
Wanderers	5	2	0	3	6	6	4
Huracan Buceo	5	1	1	3	6	11	3
Liverpool	5	1	1	3	8	11	3

*Peñarol and Danubio — who as first division champions had a second chance to play runners-up Defensor for a place and beat them 4-3 (on penalties) — qualify for Libertadores Cup.

PERU

De-centralized Championship (final standings)

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Sporting Cristal	22	11	6	5	28	15	28
Alianza At. Sullana	22	12	3	7	29	22	27
Universitario	22	10	6	6	42	20	26
Union Huaral	22	11	4	7	40	27	26
Univ. Tec. Cajamarca	22	9	6	7	33	29	24
Octavio Espinoza	22	10	4	8	32	29	24
Deportivo Junin	22	9	4	9	29	23	22
Cienciano	22	7	6	9	27	33	20
Mariano Melgar	22	7	5	10	33	38	19
San Agustin	22	5	8	9	18	33	18
Minas San Vicente	22	3	7	12	10	34	13

Libertadores Cup play-off "Liguilla" (final standings)

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Sporting Cristal	5	2	2	1	3	2	8
Universitario	5	2	3	0	6	3	7
Alianza At. Sullana (1)	5	2	1	2	4	4	6
Octavio Espinoza	5	1	3	1	5	4	5
Union Huaral	5	1	2	2	4	6	4
Alianza	5	0	3	2	8	9	3

*Sporting Cristal — who have two bonus points — qualified for Libertadores Cup together with already qualified Universitario. Alianzo have one bonus point for finishing second in de-centralized championship.

SOUTH KOREA TOPS

From PETER BURNS

ALTHOUGH they never won a major honour during 1988, South Korea topped the list of performances just ahead of Iraq, winners of the Gulf Cup and Arab Nations' Cup.

Having failed at home in the Olympic Games and their own President's Cup, the Koreans were warm favourites to win the Asian Cup and underline their growing reputation as Asia's best; especially as their main rivals for the title, Iraq, would not be competing.

But, after winning their five lead-up games, the Korean attack suffered a bout of its intermittent impotence in the final and lost on penalties to the Saudis.

The Koreans' only loss came in the Jakarta-based Asian Cup qualifying group in June. As the tournament clashed with the President's Cup, the Korean F.A. sent their third stringers and lost the opening encounter 0-2 to Bahrain. A 1-1 draw with South Yemen followed, but qualification was finally secured with a 4-0 victory over the hosts, Indonesia.

Second-placed Iraq had appeared certain to finish on top of the rankings until they lost their last game of the year 0-2 at home to Kuwait; who they had beaten twice earlier in the year.

Iraq have been the pre-eminent Arab nation over the past couple of years and were expected to make a strong bid for the Asian Cup until they pulled out of the Kuala Lumpur qualifiers in protest over fixture changes.

Third-placed Syria proved, once again, that, while they are not one of the continent's most attractive teams, they possess a well-drilled defence and can be extremely difficult to break down.

The Syrians lost only three of their 17 outings and were unfortunate in the Arab Cup where they lost the final to Iraq (on penalties) after edging past Algeria, Bahrain, Kuwait and Egypt earlier in the tournament.

The Chinese were in outstanding form during the early part of the year and completed their first 10 matches without conceding a goal. And, although they lost their way against superior opposition in the Olympic Games, they seemed a good bet to upset the favourites in the Asian Cup finals.

However, they had to settle for fourth place after losing an extra-time semi-final to the Koreans and failing from the spot in the third place decider.

Iran, North Korea and the United Arab Emirates earned their respective 5th, 6th and 7th rankings with consistent, if unspectacular, displays. Indonesia finished 8th by virtue of victories against sub-standard opposition and would most probably lose more often than not to the teams just below them.

Asian Cup champion Saudi Arabia's relatively low ranking is due to the fact that most of their 27 matches were against quality opposition. Their seven defeats were against Qatar, Iraq, New Zealand (twice), Australia, Brazil and Argentina. If they had not taken part in Australia's Bicentennial Gold Cup, the Saudis would have finished much higher in the rankings.

While Kuwait, Malaysia and Hong Kong appear to be in decline, Japan's low ranking is the result of sending their second stringers to the Asian Cup finals.

The most alarming signs, though, must be for India. Although in steady decline for many years, Asia's second-most populous nation had a disastrous time of it during 1988 and failed to even score a goal in their five outings against Bangladesh, Thailand, North Yemen, UAEmirates and China! And if domestic fare is anything to go on, it will be a long stay in the basement of Asian soccer for India.

In the Oceania rankings, Fiji deservedly finished on top following some outstanding displays.

Making a full recovery from disruptions of last year, the Fijians lost only one of their nine games in 1988 and captured their first international honours when winning the inaugural Melanesian Cup in the Solomon Islands.

Although they lost their last match 1-5 away to Australia, the Aussies had earlier been beaten in Fiji, as had New Zealand (twice).

Australia were world news with victories over both Argentina and Yugoslavia during the year, but the 1-0 defeat at the hands or Fiji kept them on second place.

New Zealand performed poorly during the year and did not deserve a higher ranking, even in this company!

ASIA

Ps	Country	P	W	D	L	F	A	PC
1	South Korea	13	8	4	1	22	7	76.92
2	Iraq	18	9	8	1	26	9	72.22
3	Syria	17	9	5	3	18	12	67.65
4	China	14	6	6	2	20	5	64.29
5	Iran	10	4	4	2	9	5	60.00
6	North Korea	5	2	2	1	3	2	60.00
7	U.A.Emirates	17	8	3	6	22	15	55.88
8	Indonesia	9	3	4	2	8	8	55.56
9	Saudi Arabia	27	9	11	7	30	26	53.70
10	Bahrain	18	6	6	6	12	10	50.00
11	Jordan	12	4	4	4	8	9	50.00
12	Singapore	4	2	0	2	9	5	50.00
13	Qatar	16	6	3	7	16	21	46.88
14	Kuwait	25	6	11	8	20	14	46.00
15	Thailand	10	2	5	3	11	17	45.00
16	Malaysia	8	2	3	3	7	14	43.75
17	Yemen AR (North)	6	1	3	2	5	7	41.67
18	Bangladesh	5	0	3	2	1	9	30.00
19	Japan	11	2	2	7	6	15	27.27
20	Hong Kong	7	1	1	5	2	9	21.43
21	Oman	9	1	1	7	5	18	16.67
22	Yemen PDR	4	0	1	3	2	8	12.50
23	Nepal	4	0	1	3	0	7	12.50
24	India	4	0	1	4	0	6	10.00
25	Pakistan	4	0	0	4	1	12	00.00
OTHERS								
	Lebanon	3	0	2	1	1	4	33.33
	Macao	1	0	0	1	0	2	00.00
	Br

WORLD CUP DATES

EUROPE

GROUP 1

19.10.88	Greece v Denmark	1-1
19.10.88	Bulgaria v Rumania	1-3
2.11.88	Rumania v Greece	3-0
2.11.88	Denmark v Bulgaria	1-1
26. 4.89	Greece v Rumania	
26. 4.89	Bulgaria v Denmark	
17. 5.89	Rumania v Bulgaria	
17. 5.89	Denmark v Greece	
11.10.89	Bulgariav Greece	
11.10.89	Denmark v Rumania	
15.11.89	Greece v Bulgaria	
15.11.89	Rumania v Denmark	

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Rumania	2	2	0	0	6	1	4
Denmark	2	0	2	0	2	2	2
Bulgaria	2	0	1	1	2	4	1
Greece	2	0	1	1	1	4	1

GROUP 2

19.10.88	England v Sweden	0-0
19.10.88	Poland v Albania	1-0
5.11.88	Albania v Sweden	1-2
8. 3.89	Albania v England	
26. 4.89	England v Albania	
7. 5.89	Sweden v Poland	
3. 6.89	England v Poland	
6. 9.89	Sweden v England	
8.10.89	Sweden v Albania	
11.10.89	Poland v England	
25.10.89	Poland v Sweden	
15.11.89	Albania v Poland	

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Sweden	2	1	1	0	2	1	3
Poland	1	1	0	0	1	0	2
England	1	0	1	0	0	0	1
Albania	2	0	0	2	1	3	0

GROUP 3

31. 8.88	Iceland v Soviet Union	1-1
12.10.88	Turkey v Iceland	1-1
19.10.88	Soviet Union v Austria	2-0
19.10.88	East Germany v Iceland	2-0
2.11.88	Austria v Turkey	3-2
30.11.88	Turkey v East Germany	3-1
12. 4.89	East Germany v Turkey	
26. 4.89	Soviet Union v East Germany	
10. 5.89	Turkey v Soviet Union	
17. 5.89	East Germany v Austria	
31. 5.89	Soviet Union v Iceland	
14. 6.89	Iceland v Austria	
23. 8.89	Austria v Iceland	
6. 9.89	Austria v Soviet Union	
6. 9.89	Iceland v East Germany	
20. 9.89	Iceland v Turkey	
25.10.89	East Germany v Soviet Union	
25.10.89	Turkey v Austria	
8.11.89	Soviet Union v Turkey	
15.11.89	Austria v East Germany	

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Soviet Union	2	1	1	0	3	1	3
Turkey	3	1	1	1	6	5	3
East Germany	2	1	0	1	3	3	2
Iceland	3	0	2	1	2	2	2
Austria	2	1	0	1	3	4	2

GROUP 4

31. 8.88	Finland v West Germany	0-4
14. 9.88	Holland v Wales	1-0
19.10.88	Wales v Finland	2-2
19.10.88	West Germany v Holland	0-0
26. 4.89	Holland v West Germany	
31. 5.89	Wales v West Germany	
31. 5.89	Finland v Holland	
6. 9.89	Finland v Wales	
4.10.89	West Germany v Finland	
11.10.89	Wales v Holland	
15.11.89	West Germany v Wales	
15.11.89	Holland v Finland	

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
West Germany	2	1	1	0	4	0	3
Holland	2	1	1	0	1	0	3
Wales	2	0	1	1	2	3	1
Finland	2	0	1	1	2	6	0

GROUP 5

14. 9.88	Norway v Scotland	1-2
28. 9.88	France v Norway	1-0
19.10.88	Scotland v Yugoslavia	1-1
22.10.88	Cyprus v France	1-1
2.11.88	Cyprus v Norway	0-3
19.11.88	Yugoslavia v France	3-2
11.12.88	Yugoslavia v Cyprus	4-0
8. 2.89	Cyprus v Scotland	2-3
8. 3.89	Scotland v France	
22. 4.89	Scotland v Cyprus	
29. 4.89	France v Yugoslavia	
16. 5.89	Norway v Cyprus	
14. 6.89	Norway v Yugoslavia	
5. 9.89	Norway v France	
6. 9.89	Yugoslavia v Scotland	
11.10.89	Yugoslavia v Norway	
11.10.89	France v Scotland	
28.10.89	Cyprus v Yugoslavia	
15.11.89	Scotland v Norway	
18.11.89	France v Cyprus	

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Yugoslavia	3	2	1	0	8	3	5
Scotland	3	2	1	0	6	4	5
France	3	1	1	1	4	4	3
Norway	3	1	0	2	4	3	2
Cyprus	4	0	1	3	3	11	1

GROUP 6

21. 5.88	Northern Ireland v Malta	3-0
14. 9.88	Northern Ireland v Rep. Ireland	0-0
19.10.88	Hungary v Northern Ireland	1-0
16.11.88	Spain v Rep. Ireland	2-0
11.12.88	Malta v Hungary	2-2
21.12.88	Spain v Northern Ireland	4-0
22. 1.89	Malta v Spain	0-2
8. 2.89	Northern Ireland v Spain	0-2
8. 3.89	Hungary v Rep. Ireland	
22. 3.89	Spain v Malta	
12. 4.89	Hungary v Malta	
26. 4.89	Malta v Northern Ireland	
26. 4.89	Rep. Ireland v Spain	
28. 5.89	Rep. Ireland v Malta	
4. 6.89	Rep. Ireland v Hungary	
6. 9.89	Northern Ireland v Hungary	
11.10.89	Hungary v Spain	
11.10.89	Rep. Ireland v Northern Ireland	
15.11.89	Spain v Hungary	
15.11.89	Malta v Rep. Ireland	

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Spain	4	4	0	0	10	0	8
Hungary	2	1	1	0	3	2	3
Northern Ireland	5	1	1	3	3	7	3
Rep. Ireland	2	0	1	1	0	2	1
Malta	3	0	1	2	2	7	1

GROUP 7

1. 9.88	Luxembourg v Switzerland	1-4
19.10.88	Luxembourg v Czechoslovakia	0-2
19.10.88	Belgium v Switzerland	1-0
16.11.88	Czechoslovakia v Belgium	0-0
16.11.88	Portugal v Luxembourg	1-0
15. 2.89	Portugal v Belgium	1-1
29. 3.89	Portugal v Switzerland	
30. 4.89	Belgium v Czechoslovakia	
10. 5.89	Czechoslovakia v Luxembourg	
7. 6.89	Luxembourg v Belgium	
7. 6.89	Switzerland v Czechoslovakia	
6. 9.89	Belgium v Portugal	
20. 9.89	Switzerland v Portugal	
6.10.89	Czechoslovakia v Portugal	
11.10.89	Luxembourg v Portugal	
11.10.89	Switzerland v Belgium	
25.10.89	Czechoslovakia v Switzerland	
25.10.89	Belgium v Luxembourg	
15.11.89	Portugal v Czechoslovakia	
15.11.89	Switzerland v Luxembourg	

Winners and runners-up from groups 3, 5, 6 and 7 qualify for the finals along with the winners of groups 1, 2 and 4 plus the two runners-up from groups 1, 2, and 4 with the best comparative records.

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Belgium	3	1	2	0	2	1	4
Czechoslovakia	2	1	1	0	2	0	3
Portugal	2	1	1	0	2	1	3
Switzerland	2	1	0	1	4	2	2
Luxembourg	3	0	0	3	1	7	0

AFRICA

ROUND 1

7. 8.88	Angola v Sudan	0-0
11.11.88	Sudan v Angola	1-2
	Angola 2-1 on agg	
	Zimbabwe w/o v Lesotho	
	Zambia w/o v Rwanda (withdrew)	
16. 7.88	Uganda v Malawi	1-0
30. 7.88	Malawi v Uganda	3-1
	Malawi 3-2 on agg	
3. 6.89	Libya v Burkino Faso	3-0
3. 7.89	Burkino Faso v Libya	2-0
	Libya 3-2 on agg	
7. 8.88	Ghana v Liberia	0-0
21. 8.88	Liberia v Ghana	2-0
	Liberia 2-0 on agg	
5. 8.88	Tunisia v Guinea	5-0
21. 8.88	Guinea v Tunisia	3-0
	Tunisia 5-3 on agg	
	Gabon w/o v Togo	

ROUND 2

Group A

6. 1.89	Algeria v Zimbabwe	3-0
8. 1.89	Ivory Coast v Libya	1-0
20. 1.89	Libya v Algeria	0-2
	(Libya withdrew: Algeria walk-over)	
22. 1.89	Zimbabwe v Ivory Coast	0-0
11. 6.89	Ivory Coast v Algeria	
11. 6.89	Zimbabwe v Libya	
23. 6.89	Libya v Ivory Coast	
25. 6.89	Zimbabwe v Algeria	
11. 8.89	Algeria v Libya	
13. 8.89	Ivory Coast v Zimbabwe	
25. 8.89	Algeria v Ivory Coast	
25. 8.89	Libya v Zimbabwe	

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Algeria	2	2	0	0	5	0	4
Ivory Coast	2	1	1	0	1	0	3
Zimbabwe	2	0	1	1	0	3	1
Libya	2	0	0	2	0	3	0

Group B

6. 1.89	Egypt v Liberia	2-0
7. 1.89	Kenya v Malawi	1-1
21. 1.89	Malawi v Egypt	1-1
22. 1.89	Liberia v Kenya	0-0
10. 6.89	Kenya v Egypt	
11. 6.89	Liberia v Malawi	
24. 6.89	Malawi v Kenya	
25. 6.89	Liberia v Egypt	
11. 8.89	Egypt v Malawi	
12. 8.89	Kenya v Liberia	
25. 8.89	Egypt v Kenya	
26. 8.89	Malawi v Liberia	

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Egypt	2	1	1	0	3	1	3
Malawi	2	0	2	0	2	2	2
Kenya	2	0	2	0	1	1	2
Liberia	2	0	1	1	0	2	1

Group C

7. 1.89	Nigeria v Gabon	1-0
8. 1.89	Cameroon v Angola	1-1
22. 1.89	Gabon v Cameroon	1-3
22. 1.89	Angola v Nigeria	2-2
10. 6.89	Nigeria v Cameroon	
10. 6.89	Angola v Gabon	
25. 6.89	Gabon v Nigeria	
12. 8.89	Nigeria v Angola	
13. 8.89	Cameroon v Gabon	
27. 8.89	Cameroon v Nigeria	
27. 8.89	Gabon v Angola	

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Cameroon	2	1	1	0	4	2	3
Nigeria	2	1	1	0	3	2	3
Angola	2	0	2	0	3	3	2
Gabon	2	0	0	2	1	4	0

Group D

8. 1.89	Morocco v Zambia	1-0
8. 1.89	Zaire v Tunisia	3-1
22. 1.89	Tunisia v Morocco	2-1
22. 1.89	Zambia v Zaire	4-2
11. 6.89	Zaire v Morocco	
11. 6.89	Zambia v Tunisia	
25. 6.89	Zambia v Morocco	
25. 6.89	Tunisia v Zaire	
13. 8.89	Morocco v Tunisia	
13. 8.89	Zaire v Tunisia	

25. 8.89	Tunisia v Zambia	
27. 8.89	Morocco v Zaire	

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Zambia	2	1	0	1	4	3	2
Zaire	2	1	0	1	5	5	2
Morocco	2	1	0	1	2	2	2
Tunisia	2	1	0	1	3	4	2

ROUND 3

Winners Gp 1 v Winners Gp 2; Winners Gp 3 v Winners Gp 4. Aggregate winning teams qualify for the finals.

ASIA

WEST ASIA

Group 1: Jordan, Iraq, Oman, Qatar.

6. 1.89	Qatar v Jordan	1-0
6. 1.89	Oman v Iraq	1-1
13. 1.89	Oman v Qatar	0-0
13. 1.89	Jordan v Iraq	0-1
20. 1.89	Jordan v Oman	2-0
20. 1.89	Qatar v Iraq	1-0
27. 1.89	Jordan v Qatar	1-1
27. 1.89	Iraq v Oman	3-0
3. 2.89	Qatar v Oman	3-0
3. 2.89	Iraq v Jordan	4-0
10. 2.89	Oman v Jordan	0-2
10. 2.89	Iraq v Qatar	2-2

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Qatar	6	3	3	0	8	3	9
Iraq	6	3	2	1	11	5	8
Jordan	6	2	1	3	5	7	5
Oman	6	0	2	4	2	11	2

Group 2 (Bahrain withdrew)

10. 3.89	Yemen AR v Syria	
15. 3.89	Saudi Arabia v Syria	
20. 3.89	Yemen AR v Saudi Arabia	
25. 3.89	Syria v Yemen AR	
30. 3.89	Syria v Saudi Arabia	
5. 4.89	Saudi Arabia v Yemen AR	

Group 3: UAE, Kuwait, Pakistan (RP 'South' Yemen withdrew).

6. 1.89	Pakistan v Kuwait	0-1
13. 1.89	Kuwait v UAE	3-2
20. 1.89	UAE v Pakistan	5-0
27. 1.89	Kuwait v Pakistan	2-0
3. 2.89	UAE v Kuwait	1-0
10. 2.89	Pakistan v UAE	1-4

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
UAE	4	3	0	1	12	4	6
Kuwait	4	3	0	1	6	3	6
Pakistan	4	0	0	4	1	12	0

EAST ASIA

Group 4: (India withdrew so Nepal switched from Group 5)

Following matches all in S. Korea:

23. 5.89	Malaysia v Nepal	
23. 5.89	Singapore v S. Korea	
25. 5.89	Malaysia v Singapore	
25. 5.89	Nepal v S. Korea	
27. 5.89	Singapore v Nepal	
27. 5.89	S. Korea v Malaysia	

Following matches all in Singapore:

3. 6.89	Singapore v Malaysia	
3. 6.89	S. Korea v Nepal	
5. 6.89	Malaysia v S. Korea	
5. 6.89	Nepal v Singapore	
7. 6.89	Singapore v S. Korea	
7. 6.89	Malaysia v Nepal	

Group 5

19. 2.89	Thailand v Bangladesh	
23. 2.89	China v Bangladesh	
23. 2.89	Thailand v Iran	
27. 2.89	Bangladesh v Iran	
28. 2.89	Thailand v China	
4. 3.89	Bangladesh v China	
5. 3.89	Iran v Thailand	
8. 3.89	Bangladesh v Thailand	
17. 3.89	Iran v Bangladesh	
11. 6.89	China v Iran	
21. 6.89	Iran v China	
28. 6.89	China v Thailand	

Group 6

21. 5.89	Indonesia v N.Korea	
21. 5.89	Hong Kong v Japan	
27. 5.89	Hong Kong v N. Korea	
28. 5.89	Indonesia v Japan	
4. 6.89	Hong Kong v Indonesia	
4. 6.89	Japan v N. Korea	
11. 6.89	N. Korea v Hong Kong	
11. 6.89	Japan v Indonesia	
18. 6.89	N. Korea v Indonesia	
18. 6.89	Japan v Hong Kong	
25. 6.89	Indonesia v Hong Kong	
25. 6.89	N. Korea v Japan	

Winners of all groups play off in a league system with top two teams qualifying for the finals.

NORTH/CENTRAL AMERICA

round 1

19. 6.88	Antigua v Neth. Antilles	0-1
29. 7.88	Neth. Antilles v Antigua	3-1
	Neth. Antilles 4-1 on agg	
12. 5.88	Jamaica v Puerto Rico	1-0
29. 5.88	Puerto Rico v Jamaica	1-2
	Jamaica 3-1 on agg	
17. 4.88	Guyana v Trinidad/Tobago	0-4
8. 5.88	Trinidad/Tobago v Guyana	1-0
	Trinidad/Tobago 5-0 on agg	
17. 7.88	Costa Rica v Panama	1-1
31. 7.88	Panama v Costa Rica	0-2
	Costa Rica 3-1 on agg	
30. 4.88	Cuba v Guatemala	0-1
15. 5.88	Guatemala v Cuba	1-1
	Guatemala 2-1 on agg	

Round Two

1.10.88	Neth. Antilles v El Salvador	0-1
16.10.88	El Salvador v Neth. Antilles	5-0
	El Salvador 6-0 on agg	
30.10.88	Trinidad/Tobago v Honduras	0-0
13.11.88	Honduras v Trinidad/Tobago	1-1
	Trinidad/Tobago on away goal: 1-1 agg	
24. 7.88	Jamaica v United States	0-0
31. 7.88	United States v Jamaica	5-1
	United States 5-1 on agg	
9.10.88	Guatemala v Canada	1-0
15.10.88	Canada v Guatemala	3-2
	Guatemala on away goals: 3-3 agg	
	Costa Rica w/o v Mexico	

Round Three

19. 3.89	Guatemala v Costa Rica	
2. 4.89	Costa Rica v Guatemala	
16. 4.89	Costa Rica v United States	
30. 4.89	United States v Costa Rica	
13. 5.89	United States v Trin/Tobago	
28. 5.89	Trin/Tobago v Costa Rica	
10. 6.89	United States v Guatemala	
11. 6.89	Costa Rica v Trin/Tobago	
25. 6.89	El Salvador v Costa Rica	
9. 7.89	El Salvador v United States	
16. 7.89	Costa Rica v El Salvador	
30. 7.89	Trin/Tobago v El Salvador	
13. 8.89	El Salvador v Trin/Tobago	
20. 8.89	Guatemala v Trin/Tobago	
3. 9.89	Trin/Tobago v Guatemala	
8.10.89	Guatemala v United States	
5.11.89	United States v El Salvador	
19.11.89	Trin/Tobago v United States	
19.11.89	Guatemala v El Salvador	
26.11.89	El Salvador v Guatemala	

Note: Top two qualify for finals.

OCEANIA

Round 1

11.12.88	Taiwan v New Zealand	0-4
18.12.88	New Zealand v Taiwan	4-1
	New Zealand 8-1 on agg	
26.11.88	Fiji v Australia	1-0
3.12.88	Australia v Fiji	5-2
	Australia 5-3 on agg	

Round 2

5. 3.89	Israel v New Zealand	
12. 3.89	Australia v New Zealand	
19. 3.89	Israel v Australia	
2. 4.89	New Zealand v Australia	
9. 4.89	New Zealand v Israel	
16. 4.89	Australia v Israel	

Winning team plays winners of S. America Gp 2 for place in the finals.

SOUTH AMERICA

Group 1

20. 8.89	Bolivia v Peru	
27. 8.89	Peru v Uruguay	
3. 9.89	Bolivia v Uruguay	
10. 9.89	Peru v Bolivia	
17. 9.89	Uruguay v Bolivia	
24. 9.89	Uruguay v Peru	

Group 2

20. 8.89	Colombia v Ecuador	
27. 8.89	Paraguay v Colombia	
3. 9.89	Ecuador v Colombia	
10. 9.89	Paraguay v Ecuador	
24. 9.89	Colombia v Paraguay	
1.10.89	Ecuador v Paraguay	

Group 3

30. 7.89	Venezuela v Brazil	
6. 8.89	Venezuela v Chile	
13. 8.89	Chile v Brazil	
20. 8.89	Brazil v Venezuela	
27. 8.89	Chile v Venezuela	
3. 9.89	Brazil v Chile	

Winners of Groups 1 and 3 qualify for the finals. Winners of Gp 2 play off against Oceania section winners for place in the finals.

Scotland's Brian McClair goes past Petsas of Cyprus during last month's World Cup qualifier.

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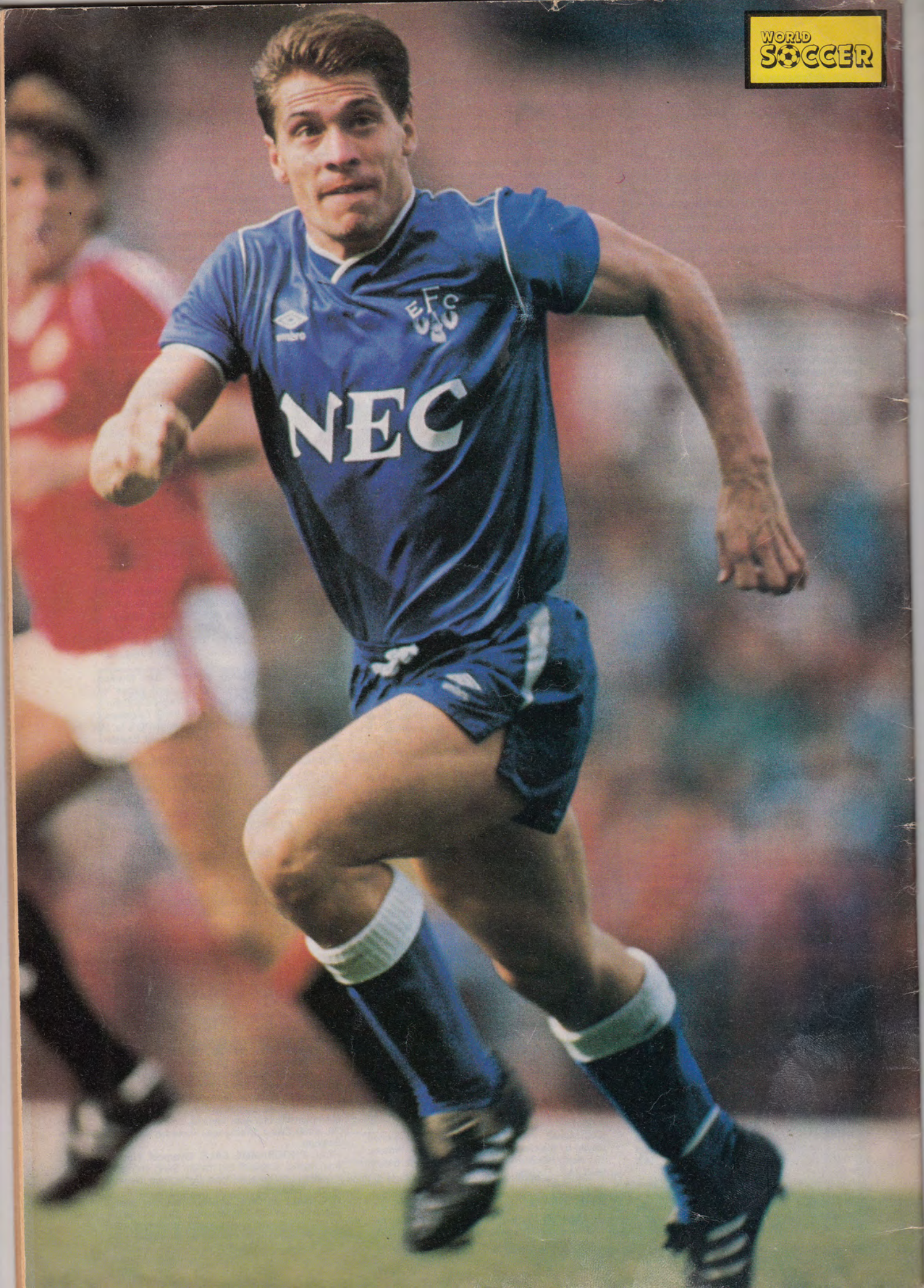
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